Guitar & Bass MAY 2012

SLIDE AWAY! BONNIE RAITT INTERVIEW

Guitar & Bass

THE POWER OF SINGLE-COILS!

The tales behind *the* sound of the electric guitar

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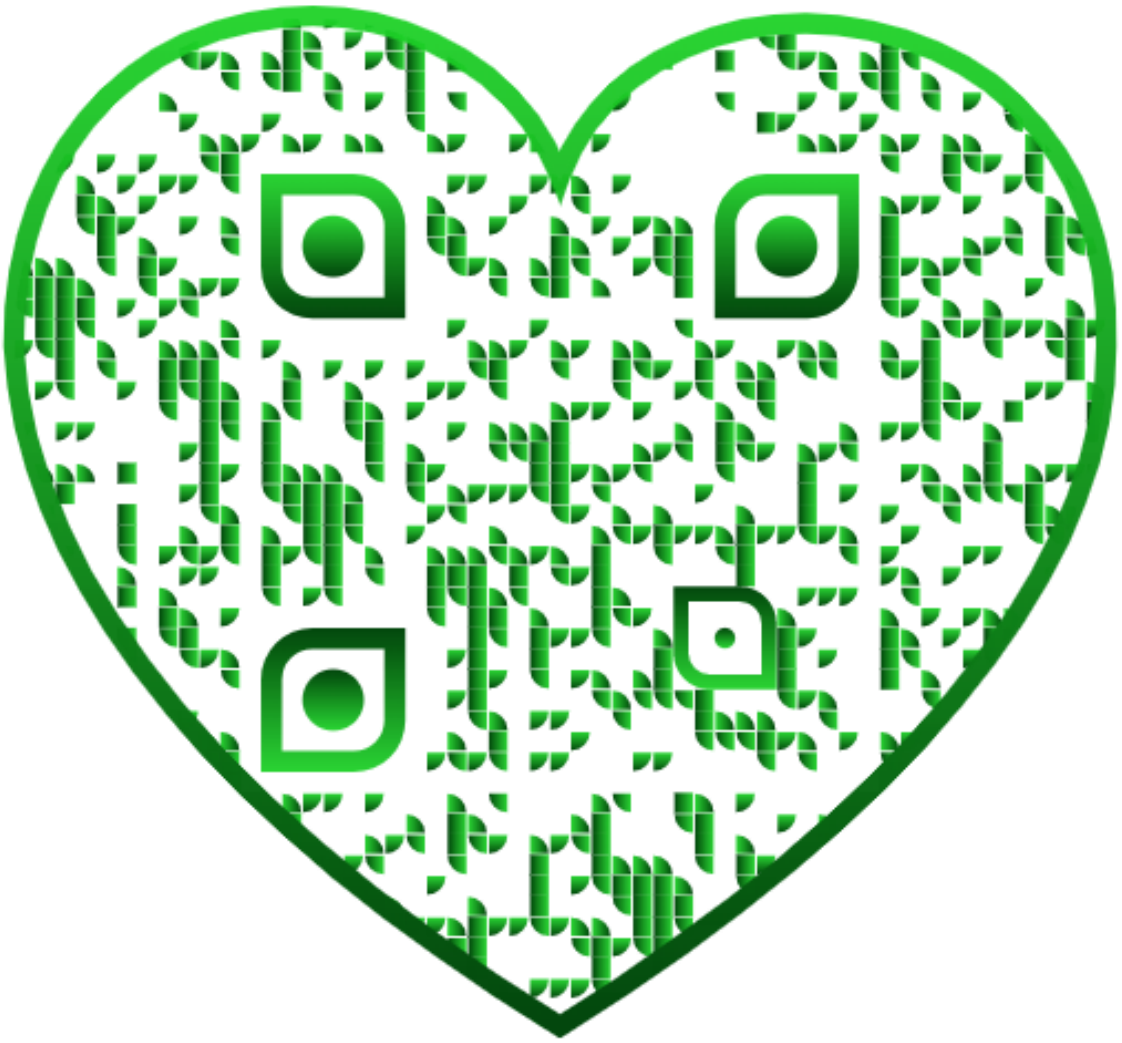

CLASSIC LOOKS
POWERFUL SOUND

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Electric Guitars

7028 - Brian May, Antique Cherry
7027 - Brian May Metal May, Black
7793 - DBZ Barchetta Eminent FR Absinthe
7785 - DBZ Barchetta ST, Aubergine
8364 - DBZ Barchetta ST FR Electric Gtr,Purple
7786 - DBZ Barchetta ST FR, Black Metallic
7789 - DBZ Barchetta ST FR, Cobalt Blue
7787 - DBZ Barchetta ST FR, Metallic Red
7788 - DBZ Barchetta ST FR, Silverburst
7814 - DBZ Crucifixion Electric Guitar
7810 - DBZ Dark Angel Electric Guitar
7812 - DBZ Bare Bones Religion Series Devil
7811 - DBZ Bare Bones Religion Series Preacher
7826 - DBZ Bird of Prey, Dark Blue Metallic
7832 - DBZ Bird of Prey, Silver
7835 - DBZ Bird of Prey, White
7798 - DBZ Bolero AB, Black
7800 - DBZ Bolero AB, Solid Wine Red
7799 - DBZ Bolero AB, White
7796 - DBZ Bolero FM, Trans Wine
7795 - DBZ Bolero FM, Vintage Natural
7794 - DBZ Bolero ST, Black
7837 - DBZ Venom, Dark Blue Metallic
5043 - Duesenberg 49er Cow Limited Edition
5042 - Duesenberg 49er Zebra Limited Edition
5041 - Duesenberg Rocket II in Black
5040 - Duesenberg Rocket II in Black & White
5205 - Epiphone Broadway Jazz Semi, Natural
8525 - Epiphone Casino in Vintage Sunburst
8695 - Epiphone ES339,Vintage Sunburst
8318 - Epiphone ES339 Ultra III, Cherry
8493 - Epiphone ES339 Ultra, Antique Natural
8528 - Epiphone ES339 Ultra, Vintage Sunburst
8529 - Epiphone ES339, Cherry
7051 - Epiphone G310, Red
8155 - Epiphone G310 SG-Shape, Ebony
5432 - Epiphone G310 SG Shape, White
8154 - Epiphone G400 Custom, Antique White
4750 - Epiphone G400 SG, Ebony
8156 - Epiphone G400 SG Shape, Worn Brown
5364 - Epiphone Les Paul Cust GX Dirty Fingers
8365 - Epiphone Les Paul Standard in Gold
8366 - Epiphone Les Paul Tribute 60s Sunburst
8190 - Epiphone Les Paul Ultra III, Ebony
8096 - Epiphone Ltd Ed Flying V, Antique White
8165 - Epiphone Ltd Ed 1961 SG, Alpine White
8325 - Epiphone Ltd Edition ES345, Alpine White
7048 - Epiphone Prophecy Les Paul Cust EX Ebony
7023 - Epiphone Riviera Ltd Ed P93 Cust Goldtop
8367 - Epiphone SG Special 1961 Reissue,White
8101 - Epiphone by Gibson, Pre-Owned
4233 - Fender USA Deluxe Telecaster, Tungsten
4231 - Fender Am Special Strat, Candy Apple Red
7942 - Fender American Standard Strat, Sunburst
8373 - Fender Am Standard Strat, Olympic White
8244 - Fender American Standard Telecaster in Candy Cola
8372 - Fender Standard Am Tele, Red, Pre-Owned
5291 - Fender Classic Player 50s Strat in Gold
5298 - Fender Classic Player Baja Tele Des Sand
4743 - Fender Classic Series 60s Strat, Blue
7112 - Fender Deluxe Lonestar Strat, Sunburst
8369 - Fender Deluxe Nashville Tele, Sunburst
8111 - Fender FSR Standard Strat in Silverburst
7075 - Fender Highway One Tele, Sunburst
4634 - Fender Jim Root Signature Strat, Black
8268 - Fender Lead 2 Electric Guitar
8113 - Fender Modern Player Available To Order
8286 - Fender Modern Player Telecaster Thinline Delux
8224 - Fender Modern Player Telecaster, Honey Burst
7784 - Fender Mustang Pawn Shop Special, Red
5335 - Fender Road Worn 50's Tele in Sunburst
5287 - Fender Road Worn 50s Strat in Black
8290 - Fender Road Worn 60's Strat, Sunburst
4229 - Fender Road Worn Player Strat, Sunburst
4232 - Fender Road Worn Player Tele, Black
8389 - Fender Squire SE Strat in Black
8371 - Fender Std Strat Mexican, Midnight Wine
7954 - Fender Standard Strat, Copper Met Burst
4326 - Fender Standard Telecaster, Arctic White
4560 - Fender Standard Telecaster, Black
4748 - Fender Standard Tele, Brown Sunburst
8356 - Fender Stratocaster Plus in Ice Blue
8374 - Fender USA Std Strat in 3 Tone Sunburst
8243 - Fender USA Telecaster Deluxe Aged Cherry
8285 - Fret King Jerry Donahue, Natural
8176 - Gibson 1968 Flying V Reissue, Ebony
8119 - Gibson Buckethead Les Paul Studio
5299 - Gibson CS336 Semi, Vintage Sunburst
8011 - Gibson Custom ES335 Dot in Silverburst
7882 - Gibson Custom Shop ES339, Pelham Blue
8029 - Gibson ES175 1956 Original
8030 - Gibson ES175 1963 Original
8270 - Gibson ES175 1989, Sunburst
8227 - Gibson ES335 Dot Plain Gloss, Cherry
8568 - Gibson ES-339, Antique Red
7846 - Gibson Explorer in Classic White
8376 - Gibson Les Paul Classic 60s Trans Ebony
8212 - Gibson Les Paul Junior, Sunburst
8118 - Gibson Les Paul Junior, Yellow Gloss
7063 - Gibson Les Paul Standard, Chicago Blue
7033 - Gibson Les Paul Std Trad Heritage Cherry
7054 - Gibson Les Paul Standard Trad, Wine Red
8126 - Gibson Les Paul Studio '60s Tribute
8324 - Gibson Les Paul Studio '60s, Sunburst
8530 - Gibson Les Paul Studio 60s Goldtop
5090 - Gibson Les Paul Studio Lefty, Wine Red
7888 - Gibson Les Paul Studio in Alpine White
7900 - Gibson Les Paul Studio in Ebony
8117 - Gibson Les Paul Studio, Green Swirl
7851 - Gibson Les Paul Studio in Wine Red
7948 - Gibson Les Paul Supreme, Trans Black
5428 - Gibson Les Paul Traditional in Ebony
8206 - Gibson Melody Maker Special, Blue Stain
8197 - Gibson Midtown Stand w/Bigsby, Faded Red

Electric Guitars

8202 - Gibson Nighthawk. Pelham Blue
8242 - Gibson SG Junior 60s LH, Heritage Cherry
8210 - Gibson SG Junior 60s, Ebony
8211 - Gibson SG Junior 60s , Ebony LEFTHANDED
5594 - Gibson SG Special Electric Guitar in White
5152 - Gibson USA Les Paul Junior 58, Sat White
4603 - Gretsch G6136 Steve Stills White Falcon
8381 - Ibanez Prestige RGB70 in Aged White
8696 - Ibanez S770FM ATF Antique Burst Flat
5722 - Jackson DK2, Trans Black
4151 - Jackson DK2M Dinky, Snow White
4992 - Jackson JS30 Gun Metal (Pre-Owned)
8383 - Jackson PC3 Electric Used in Natural
8194 - Jackson SL2 Electric Guitar, Cobalt Blue
4150 - Jackson SL3MG Soloist, Natural
8386 - Levin LE1000 Electric Guitar in Redburst
8385 - Levin LE100S Electric Guitar In Natural
8384 - Levin LE100S Electric Guitar In Sunburst
6786 - Levin LE2000 in Metallic Redburst
4948 - Levin LE500 Electric Guitar in White
8216 - Levin LE5000 Electric Guitar, Sunburst
8051 - Lodestone Electric Artist, Trans Black
8052 - Lodestone Electric Artist in Sunburst
8048 - Lodestone Electric Artist, Trans Honey
8049 - Lodestone Electric Artist, Trans Red
8059 - Lodestone Electric Pro S, Chignal Blue
8065 - Lodestone Electric Pro S, Rodings White
8058 - Lodestone Electric Pro S, Tobacco Sburst
8066 - Lodestone Electric Pro S in Waltham Black
8055 - Lodestone Electric Pro, Chignal Blue
8056 - Lodestone Electric Pro, Rodings White
8053 - Lodestone Electric Pro, Roxwell Red
8057 - Lodestone Electric Pro, St James Silver
8054 - Lodestone Electric Pro, Tobacco Sunburst
8072 - Lodestone Electric Standard S, T. Sburst
8070 - Lodestone Electric Standard Trans Black
8071 - Lodestone Electric Standard S, White
8067 - Lodestone Standard Electric, T. Sunburst
8069 - Lodestone Electric Standard in White
8085 - Lodestone Pulse in Burr Maple Honeyburst
8086 - Lodestone Pulse, Matt Block
8084 - Lodestone Pulse in Metallic Gold
8087 - Lodestone Pulse, Tobacco Sunburst
7929 - MusicMan Axis Super Sport Blue Burst
4720 - MusicMan Silhouette Special, Candy Red
4664 - MusicMan Silo 30, White
4778 - MusicMan Sterling Silo 20, Black
4806 - PRS CE24 in Cherry Pre-Owned
5049 - PRS Custom 24 USA in Black Slate Finish
4631 - PRS HB1 USA Semi, Vintage Natural
5047 - PRS HB2 II USA Semi, Smoked Amber
8042 - PRS McCarty Sunburst
4184 - PRS SE Santana Electric Guitar, Orange
4185 - PRS SE Santana Electric Guitar, Yellow
8222 - PRS Soapbar II Pre-Owned, Green
6124 - Patrick Eggle Berlin Extra Lefty, Amber
5938 - Patrick Eggle Berlin Plus Lefty, Amber
6123 - Patrick Eggle Double Cutaway in Blue
6176 - Patrick Eggle LA Custom Shop in Aqua
6175 - Patrick Eggle New Wave Extra in Black
6121 - Patrick Eggle RSG Electric Guitar, Amber
4268 - Rickenbacker 330 12 String Semi, Jetglo
4269 - Rickenbacker 360 12 String Semi, Jetglo
6951 - Rickenbacker 360 Semi, Fireglo
6952 - Rickenbacker 360 Semi, Jetglo
4270 - Rickenbacker 360 Semi, Mapleglo
8021 - Squier Classic Vibe Strat 60s Lefthanded
8120 - Squier Lefthanded C.Vibe 50s Tele Blonde
4235 - Squier Vint Mod Jazzmaster Butterscotch
4256 - Vintage AV2, Sunburst
6983 - Washburn DD61 Dan Donegan
6982 - Washburn USADD70MayaDanDonegan,Grey
4757 - Washburn N1 Vintage Nuno Bettencourt Nat
6994 - Washburn PS7000, Paul Stanley Sig, Honey
7074 - Washburn SI61 Obey Scott Ian Sig, Black
6991 - Washburn USA Custom WI556, Metallic Red
6997 - Washburn V200 ProE in Black
7005 - Washburn WI100, Gunmetal Grey
7002 - Washburn WI100, Red
8410 - Washburn WI100 Electric Gtr Satin Black
7003 - Washburn WI100, White
8412 - Washburn WI18 Idol Quilted Trans Black
8411 - Washburn WI18 Idol Quilted Trans Red
7007 - Washburn WI26 Joe Trohman, Black
7006 - Washburn WI26 Joe Trohman, White
7356 - Washburn WI420KB Idol, Black
8409 - Washburn WI-440F Idol Elect Flame Honey
8408 - Washburn WI-440F Idol Tobacco Sunburst
8406 - Washburn WI-460E Idol Electric, Black
8405 - Washburn WI-460E Idol Electric in White
6988 - Washburn WI50 in Black
6989 - Washburn WI50 Pro-E, Black
8404 - Washburn WI-63 SF Donegan Sig, Black
6882 - Washburn WI666 in Blood / Chainsaw
6885 - Washburn WV40 Pro-E in Black
6995 - Washburn WV40VASIK Scott Ian Blood Splat
6890 - Washburn WV548 USA Custom, Black/White
6996 - Washburn WV66ANC, Nick Catanese, Black
6898 - Washburn Wi14 Idol in Metallic Blue
6899 - Washburn Wi14 Idol in Wine Red
8230 - Washburn X10 Bass Guitar, Black
6895 - Washburn X100 in Metallic Grey
6900 - Washburn X200 Pro in Trans Black
6425 - Westcoast ST Junior in Black & Sunburst
6449 - Westcoast ST1 in Ivory, Red & Natural
8321 - Yaira NY0021LAcoustic Guitar LH
8416 - Yamaha Pacifica 012 Electric Guitar in Red Metallic
8414 - Yamaha Pacifica 012 El Gtr Dark Blu Met
6955 - Yamaha Pacifica 112V in Rasberry Red
6957 - Yamaha Pacifica 112V in Tobacco Sunburst
4780 - Yamaha Pacifica 112VCX, Vintage White
8121 - Yamaha Pacifica 311H, Vintage White
8184 - Yamaha Pacifica 510V , Candy Apple Red
8763 - Yamaha Pacifica 611, Trans Black

Bass Guitars

4588 - Alembic Epic 4, Natural
4557 - Bass Collection Power Bass, Black
7479 - Breedlove JB350 CR4, Electro 4, Blonde
8301 - Breedlove Electro Acoustic Bass Natural
8687 - Breedlove Passport Plus B350/CB4
4910 - Bridge Cetus Electric Double Bass
4909 - Bridge Cetus Electric Double Bass in Marble Finishes
7228 - Epiphone Les Paul Special, Black
7262 - Epiphone Thunderbird 4, Sunburst Finish
8098 - Epiphone Thunderbird IV, Ebony
4882 - Fender USA 62 Vintage Precision Sunburst
7944 - Fender American Deluxe Jazz Bass, Black
8431 - Fender USA Standard Jazz Bass in Black
7943 - Fender Am Stan Precision Bass, Sunburst
7076 - Fender Highway One Precision, Wine
8177 - Fender Modern Player Jaguar Bass, Black
8113 - Fender Modern Player Available To Order
4749 - Fender Standard Precision, Candy Red
8287 - Fender Standard Jazz Bass, Brown S.burst
5572 - Fender Standard Precision, Arctic White
5190 - FleaBass The Wild One Junior, Black
5393 - Levin LAB150 Bass, Electro 4, Black
5394 - Levin LAB150 Bass, Electro 4, Natural
5392 - Levin LAB150 Bass, Electro 4, Sunburst
6782 - Levin LB100 Bass, Electro 4, Sunburst
4999 - Levin LB100J, Antique Sunburst
4735 - Levin LB100P, Black
6640 - Levin LB200, Cherry Sunburst
6781 - Levin LB200, Cherry Sunburst
6780 - Levin LB400, Redburst
8214 - Lightwaves Saber 5 String Fretless Bass
8073 - Lodestone Primal Artist
8075 - Lodestone Primal Instinct J Bass, Green
8076 - Lodestone Primal Instinct J Bass, Sburst
8077 - Lodestone Primal Instinct J Bass, Black
8079 - Lodestone Primal Instinct P Bass, Green
8080 - Lodestone Primal Instinct Pbass Sunburst
8078 - Lodestone Primal Instinct P Bass, Cream
8081 - Lodestone Primal Pro in Chignal Blue
8083 - Lodestone Primal Pro, Rodings White
8082 - Lodestone Primal Pro 4, Tobacco Sunburst
8174 - Lodestone Primal Pro 5, Chignal Blue
4997 - MTD Kingston Heir, Trans Cherry
4175 - Marleaux B Votan 4, Red
5723 - Marleaux Consat Custom 6, Natural
5713 - Marleaux M Bass Custom 5, Maple & Walnut
4178 - Marleaux Votan Deluxe 5, Blue Jeans
7930 - MusicMan Sterling 4 String Bass in Red
4703 - MusicMan Stingray 2EQ, Blue Pearl
4781 - MusicMan Stingray 3EQ, True Gold
4920 - MusicMan Stingray 5, Black
7923 - Musicman Gilded White Classic Stingray
8344 - Musicman Stingray 3 EQ Natural 4 String Bass
5110 - NS Design NXT Electric Double Bass
7301 - Ovation USA Elite, Electro 4, Natural
4253 - Overwater Aspiration Artist, Trans Red
4250 - Overwater Aspiration Deluxe 4, Amber
8435 - Overwater Aspiration Std 4, Black Cherry
8329 - Overwater Aspiration Standard 4 String in Metalic Blue
7849 - Overwater Contemporary Jazz, Trans Blue
8198 - Overwater J Series Deluxe 4, Sunburst
4355 - Overwater UK Perception, Natural
5954 - Peavey Cirrus Series BXP, Redwood
5123 - Peavey USA Cirrus 5, Natural
6909 - Rickenbacker 4001C64, Mapleglo
7890 - Rickenbacker 4003, Jetglo
6919 - Rickenbacker 4003, Mapleglo
4337 - Rockbass Corvette $$ Double Buck, Black
5122 - Rockbass Fortress 4, Blue
5121 - Rockbass Streamer LX5, Black
5309 - Rockbass Streamer Standard, Blue Stain
8213 - Spector NS2000 5 String Bass, Blue
7204 - Squier Classic Vibe Precision 50s Blonde
7260 - Squier P Bass Std Sp Lefty Antique Burst
4328 - Steinberger Spirit XT25 5, Black
7922 - VMB75 Venture Series Bass Guitar
4648 - Warwick Corvette $$ 5 Ltd, Natural
7870 - Warwick Infinity 5, Natural
5952 - Warwick Streamer LX5, Emerald Green
8436 - Warwick Thumb Bass 4 Bolt on in Natural
8229 - Washburn WB66 Idol 4 String in Trans Red
8569 - Westcoast BG1 Bass Guitar
6447 - Westcoast BG2, Natural or Trans Red
6446 - Westcoast BG4 Neck Thru Body, Brown
6445 - Westcoast BG5 Fretless, Natural
6448 - Westcoast JB5, Sunburst or Amber
8438 - Westcoast JP1 4 String Bass in Black
8437 - Westcoast JP1 4 String Bass in Trans Red
8157 - Yamaha BB1024X in Vintage White
4649 - Yamaha BB2024X, Vintage White
8275 - Yamaha BB425X,Vintage White
5124 - Yamaha BBNEII Nathan East Model, Black
6360 - Yamaha SLB200 Silent Double Bass
4331 - Yamaha TRB1004J, Trans Black

Acoustic Guitars

5260 - BSG OM15F, Orchestra Model, Natural
8299 - Breedlove AC200 / SM Acoustic Guitar,Nat
5002 - Breedlove AC250CR Lefty Electro, Natural
5003 - Breedlove AD200SM, Dreadnought, Natural
5004 - Breedlove AD20SR+, Dreadnought, Natural
8033 - Breedlove AD25/SM
8035 - Breedlove AJ250/SF Plus Electro Acoustic
7979 - Breedlove Passport Plus C250SFE
4282 - Breedlove Passport + D/SFE Elec Sunburst
7995 - Breedlove D35/SMECutaway ElectroAcoustic
7996 - Breedlove J350/EF Cutaway
4894 - Cort Earth 200 Lefty Dreadnought Natural
4612 - Dave King Katrina Model 000, Sunburst
4613 - Dave King Louise, Koa, Parlour, Natural

Acoustic Guitars

4769 - EKO Ranger EQ Vintage Series, Black
8271 - EKO Ranger 6 String in Black
8249 - Eastman ERO E
4470 - Faith F000 Sig Standard 12 Fret Natural
8300 - Faith FECS Electro Acoustic Guitar
7956 - Faith FECV Venus Cutaway Electro MKII
7958 - Faith Neptune Natural Cutaway
8323 - Faith Venus 12 Electro Acoustic Guitar
4717 - Faith Venus II FV, Electro, Natural
8149 - Faith Venus Trembesi 12 String, Natural
6928 - Fender CD160SE Electro 12 String, Black
5096 - Fender CD60, Natural
4335 - Fender CD60CE Dreadnought Elec, Sunburst
7918 - Gibson Blues King in Vintage Sunburst
7032 - Gibson J200 Standard Jumbo Guitar
8241 - Gibson J200 Studio, Vintage Sunburst
4681 - Gibson J45, Custom Shop, Sunburst
8700 - Gibson J45 Custom Shop, Lightburst
7920 - Gibson J45 Vintage Sunburst
7062 - Gibson L200 Emmylou Harris Signature
8296 - Gibson J-45 Std Acoustic Guitar
7120 - Gitane Cigano GJ5 Gypsy Jazz, Natural
7122 - Gitane D500 Gypsy Jazz, Natural
7216 - Gitane DG250 Gypsy Jazz, Natural
4642 - Guild GADJF30, Jumbo Electro, Blonde
4555 - Jimmy Moon Bryan Adams Signature
4554 - Jimmy Moon PF0003 Electro, Pau Ferro B&S
6948 - Jimmy Moon RD3, Electro, Natural
5601 - K Yairi G1F, Parlour, Vintage Sunburst
5602 - K Yairi WY1, Bob Weir Model, Natural
8340 - LAG T100A Auditorium Acoustic Guitar
7304 - LAG T100ACE Cutaway Electro Brown Shadow
8336 - LAG T66DCE Dreadnought Cutaway
7967 - LAG T66D12 Dreadnought 12-String
8274 - Landola J855L Jumbo Left Handed
8320 - Landola JC855 Electro Acoustic Guitar LH
6784 - Levin LD30CE12, 12 String Electro, Black
5404 - Levin LD30CE12, 12 String Electro, Nat
5401 - Levin LD30CELH, Lefty Electro, Natural
5402 - Levin LD30CELH, Lefty Electro, Black
5403 - Levin LD60CE, Dreadnought Electro, Blue
5399 - Levin LD60CELH, Lefty Electro, Black
5400 - Levin LD60CELH, Lefty Electro, Natural
5407 - Levin LS500CE, Small Electro, Blue
5398 - Levin LS500LCE, Lefty Electro, Black
5397 - Levin LS500LCE, Lefty Electro, Natural
5406 - Levin LS600CE, Small Electro, Natural
8302 - Levin SV209 Acoustic Guitar
8308 - Levin SW203 BK Acoustic Guitar
8313 - Levin SW203 CETU-BK Acoustic Guitar
8310 - Levin SW203 CETU-N Acoustic Guitar
8312 - Levin SW206 CETU-BK Acoustic Guitar
8311 - Levin SW206 CETU-CS Acoustic Guitar
8294 - Levin SW206 CETU-TR Electro Acoustic Guitar
8322 - Levin SW206CETU 12 Strg Ele/Acoustic Gtr
8295 - Levin LC30 CE Electro Acoustic, Sunburst
4754 - Martin Custom X Series Electro, Natural
6010 - Martin 00028EC Eric Clapton, Natural
4317 - Martin 0028VS, Parlour, Natural
6554 - Martin D18 Dreadnought, Natural
5702 - Martin D28 Dreadnought, Natural
6008 - Martin D35 Dreadnought, Natural
5013 - Martin D41 Dreadnought, Natural
8277 - Martin DC15ME Dreadnought Cutaway
8199 - Martin DCME Electro Acoustic Guitar
8038 - Martin DCX1E Electro Acoustic Lefty
8319 - Martin DCX1E LAcoustic Guitar LH
8041 - Martin DCX1E in Black
8022 - Martin DX1 JMAE Westside Custom Series
8167 - Martin HD28VS Pre-Owned Acoustic Guitar
6007 - Martin OM21 Orchesta, Natural
8088 - Martin SWDGT SustainableWood Dreadnought
8037 - Martin WCE OMX1RAE Westside Custom Ed.
8122 - Martin WCE Style III 000CX1RE CFM Custom
4402 - Northwood MAN80 Mini Jumbo Mango Electro
6405 - Northwood R70D, Dreadnought Electro, Nat
6404 - Northwood R70 00 14fret Electro, Natural
4400 - Northwood R80, 000V Electro, Natural
6403 - Northwood R80, 0M Electro, Natural
5093 - Ovation CDX24 Electro Acoustic Guitar in Natural
4855 - PJ Eggle Etowah, 000, 12 Fret, Natural
7253 - PJ Eggle Linville C, OM, Natural
4779 - PJ Eggle Linville Gareth Pearson Electro
4856 - PJ Eggle Saluda C, Small Jumbo Elec, Nat
4857 - PJ Eggle Saluda, Small Jumbo, Natural
7915 - Pilgrim by Vintage VPG100
6115 - Rally Resonator
4620 - Recording King RM996 Resonator, Green
5257 - Satori YD18EQ, Dreadnought Electro, Nat
5256 - Satori YD28EQ, Dreadnought Electro, Nat
5252 - Satori YD28HEQ, Dreadnought Electro, Nat
8234 - Satori YD42EQ Electro Acoustic
5255 - Satori YO28HEQ, OM Electro, Natural
8047 - Takamine AN16 Dreadnought, Pre-Owned
8289 - Tanglewood 55 VS Acoustic Guitar
7973 - Tanglewood Michael Sanden Master Design
8288 - Tanglewood TW1000N Acoustic Guitar
8343 - Tanglewood TGRSFCE Electro Acoustic
8363 - Tanglewood TSF CE Acoustic Guitar Red
8346 - Tanglewood TSF CE Black
8345 - Tanglewood TSF CE White Electro Acoustic Guitar
8032 - Tanglewood TSF CE Natural
7984 - Tanglewood TSFCE XB Cutaway Electro
7993 - Tanglewood TVC KOA C Cutaway
4194 - Tanglewood TW115AS Dreadnought
4180 - Tanglewood TW130 ASMCE Orchestra Natural
8292 - Tanglewood TW15 NS Acoustic Guitar
4195 - Tanglewood TW15 ASM, Solid Mahogany
7991 - Tanglewood TW15NS Dreadnought
8331 - Tanglewood TW47E Electro Acoustic
8293 - Tanglewood TW55N Acoustic Guitar
8328 - Tanglewood TW55VS Super Jumbo, VS
4191 - Tanglewood TW73 Parlour Electro Sunburst
8221 - Taylor W12CE Electro Acoustic, Pre-Owned

For full guitar details, pricing and photos, enter the number next to each guitar model into our SKU search facility on the website.

Guitar & Bass

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Starting in pole position...

To some they may be just uninteresting bits of plastic, metal and wire, but after reading this month's cover story on single-coils you'll begin to realise just how pivotal these pickups have been in the history and development of the instrument we all know and love so dearly. While we, quite rightly, marvel at the sounds our favourite guitar gods have delivered over the years, this month's cover feature is also a fine opportunity to learn about those often unsung heroes who've been responsible for providing the star names – and, indeed, all of us – with the sonic ammunition to rock out.

Once you've had your fill of all this magnetic goodness, it'll be time to head over to the reviews section: Gretsch, Fender, Zoom and Alvarez are among the choice names to contemplate. And legends-in-their-lifetime Bonnie Raitt and Walter Trout are among the top guitar players who've been subjected to a *G&B* grilling this issue.

If you fancy being a bit more hands-on, there's a fine three-for-the-price-of-one DIY workshop for you to tackle, as well as the opportunity to learn the secrets of Mark Knopfler and Ozzy bassist Bob Daisley. And if vintage gear and the stories behind them are your thing, then head on down to our regular section for your fix of all things classic. Yes, we hope there's something for every member of the guitar-playing family in this issue. Enjoy...

John

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Reverberations

Write to *Guitar & Bass*, Anthem Publishing, Station House, Station Approach, 33 North Street, Carshalton, SM5 2HW or e-mail us: guitarandbass@anthem-publishing.com
Please note, we reserve the right to edit where we feel it is appropriate, or to print extracts from longer correspondences

STAR LETTER

Rosetti

Written a Star Letter? Contact Rosetti on 01376 550033 to claim your Fusion gig bag – electric, acoustic or bass available!

ARBITERS OF GOOD TASTE

While reading the article on Tony Keen and his guitar collection in the March 2012 issue, I felt inspired to put pen to paper. It wasn't only the sight of the Zenta guitar, which was my very first electric guitar, but it was also something Tony said about his wife buying him an Epiphone as a birthday present.

Let me explain. Due to marriage, kids, work etc, I stopped playing live back in the '80s, and although I still owned a few guitars and tinkered for my own amusement, I realise now that I was losing the magic that I felt when I first took up the guitar. But this was about to change when one day back in 2004 I walked into a local music shop and saw a '70s Arbiter double-neck staring at me from the other side of the shop. I drew my wife over and told her how much I'd always wanted one but had never been able to afford it when I was younger. She suggested I buy it now, but I said I didn't feel I could justify it because of not playing in a band, and we left the shop. Still curious, I went back a week later to take another look but to my dismay it had gone! Then imagine my surprise and joy when my wife presented it to me on Christmas Day, just like Tony's wife had done to him on his birthday!

The important part of this story is that my wife didn't then realise the true value of what she had done with such a loving gesture – I suddenly felt encouraged and my enthusiasm for all things guitar was rekindled, and remains with me now, and I'm so thankful that it does. Although only 56, I'm now retired and finding even more time to improve my playing skills, and loving every minute of it.

However, unfortunately for my wife, I have now been afflicted with a severe case of Guitar Acquisition Disorder and have accumulated 22 guitars, all of which need their own space – so one of the bedrooms is now a music room, which gives me a lot of pleasure and allows my wife to watch TV in peace!

And, like so many of your readers, I play for me! If I get the chance to play live again then that's a bonus, but at the end of the day I'm just happy that I am still playing after all these years. I have also realised that when someone starts learning to play the guitar, it is not a prerequisite that you have to end up being as good as Clapton or Malmsteen, but just get to the best standard you can for yourself, and enjoy it!

Kevin O'Shea *via email*

G&B **Three cheers for Kevin's wife. Negative feedback from partners is often based on the guitarist in question having understandable (if not justifiable) rock star fantasies, but in fact most guitar players' significant others prefer them to have such an enthralling pastime over spending all their time in the pub or the bookies. But we sometimes wonder if the shoe is ever on the other foot. It would be great to hear about a supportive boyfriend/husband of a female guitar-lover. Does such a thing exist? If you know of one, or indeed are one, please let us know. We love blowing up a stereotype around here.**

SHANGHAI SURPRISE

The February issue is the first time I read your magazine, and I like it a lot! It is very informative, and the stories are interesting. I really appreciate the article about counterfeit guitars – thanks for the information! I never realised that the fake guitar problem was so serious, until then. Now I am more aware of the issue. I just went to Shanghai and I saw many fakes (a salesperson once admitted that there are many fake guitars out there). I even saw an expensive Musicman model for only about £300! It is a shame that there are lots of counterfeit guitars on eBay, and that the storm is spreading to the other continents. So I think it would be a good idea if you have an article telling people how to identify a fake guitar in detail – and for different brands too. I live in Hong Kong, and I feel sorry about my country's fake guitars.

Vicki *via email*

PS. By the way, not all Chinese guitars sound bad, some sound quite good actually, as you can hear from many *YouTube* videos.

G&B **Glad to read your thoughts, Vicki. We have a number of features in the pipeline, based on the feedback we received from that cover story, and as soon as they're ready we'll get them in these pages. We don't doubt your comment regarding the quality of some Chinese guitars, and that sort of adds to the real shame of it all. Plenty of guitar makers in other countries outside the US have done their own, unique, take on the electric guitar – and the world's a better place for doing so. If the people involved in counterfeiting put their minds to innovating and creating something new, that would be something worth celebrating. We know this is an idealistic,**

probably naive, view. But it doesn't make it any less heartfelt...

GETS THE MOTORS RUNNING

Please find attached photos of guitars I have built or resprayed. I would love them to be featured in your magazine, even if it is just a small pic somewhere in it. Two of my guitars are on show at the moment, one of which is in the Bentley/Lotus showroom.

Michael Hinton *via email*

G&B **Thanks for sending the photos, Michael. The guitars look the business, and the one in the showroom certainly makes the place a much classier establishment. The cars/guitars link is one with a long history, and we're glad you're keeping the tradition alive.**

JAZZ TIMING

My name is Greg and I live in the USA. I love all things guitar! When I got home after purchasing your January issue, I turned to page 8 (When I'm 64) and started to read the articles. After reading *Reverberations*; (*When I'm 64* and *Buy High Sell Low)*, I was like 'Wow! That's just like me!'

I'm a 62 year old guy trying to learn how to play jazz guitar, and let me tell you it's not always easy! I've taken some lessons, but because of my job I was not able to continue them. So, I have purchased many, many books and courses and lessons on CD/DVD. I learn something one day and forget it the next day, but I keep trying. I don't always understand how to form a major 13th or a Dominant 9th or 7th chord, but I don't care. I still love trying!

I have to play everyday just to be 'bad', but I love it just the same, and I can't wait to get home so I can pick up my guitars and practice. Although I'm 62 and will never be a George Benson or Grant Green or Joe Pass or Les Paul at 90 (I love these guys, and many more) I still love to play for my own enjoyment. So age should not be a deterrent to anyone who loves music, it keeps you healthy, wealthy and wise!

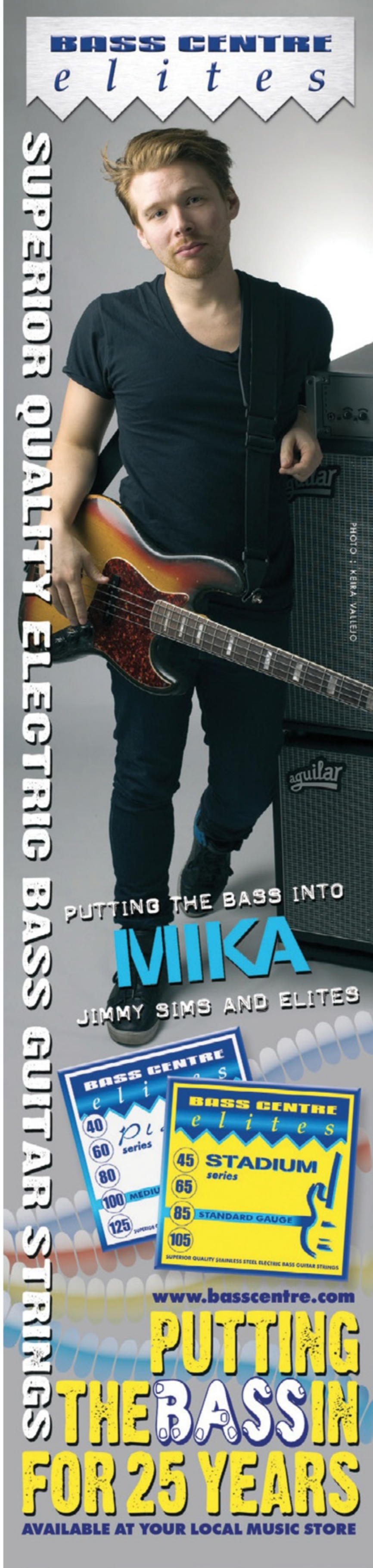
Secondly, in answer to the *Buy High Sell Low* letter on the same page, a quick note to Peter Cardiff. I have purchased about 20 different guitars trying to find that jazz sound and probably about seven to 10 amps. Over the last few years, I've keep looking for a jazz guitar that will give me that great sound, but I'm not a working musician and I don't have thousands of dollars to put out for a fine jazz instrument.

As a result, I've been searching for a good jazz box for under a grand! So far I've had nine Ibanez guitars, two Epiphones, two D'Angelicos (Japanese build), one Stromberg and one Fender. Some of these have been pretty good, but not what I wanted. I finally found my voice in a Hagstrom HJ800 and a Samick Royal L5 playing through a Roland Cube 40. Both have spruce tops and sound much better than their cost.

So, if you like a guitar... buy it. Buy it because you like it. If you buy to resell, you're going to take a beating. Retailers don't want the guitars back, they want money. While they may love guitars and guitarists, what they really want is to pay their bills, pay their employees and make a profit. So you have to expect that the profit built into an instrument at each level will never be returned to you. Not even new Fender, Gibson or PRS guitars have a good return after you walk out the door. The only money is in vintage or high-end specialist guitars that are not built anymore or one of-a-kind or made from some wood from the dinosaur age. So relax... if you buy a guitar and it's too late to take it back to the dealer, try other options such as eBay or Craigslist. I've resold every guitar I didn't want on eBay. Of course you don't get your full return, but I have been able to get as much 50 to 75 per cent of my money back, which I use toward my next guitar. While some retailers might tell you they're 'not interested in that brand of guitar' there's someone out there that is! You've just got to find them. You bought it... someone else will, too.

Gregory Henley *via email*

G&B **Sounds like you've got your head firmly screwed on your shoulders, Gregory. A pragmatic yet optimistic letter such as yours, regarding players in for the long haul in terms of improving their technique as well as searching for the right gear on a budget, should be read by those on a similar path every time they get despondent along the way. We wish you every success in your endeavours, sir.**



Woke up this mornin'... NEWS

Reborn in the USA

Fender has announced a major overhaul of four of the acclaimed American Standard Series guitars and basses for the coming year

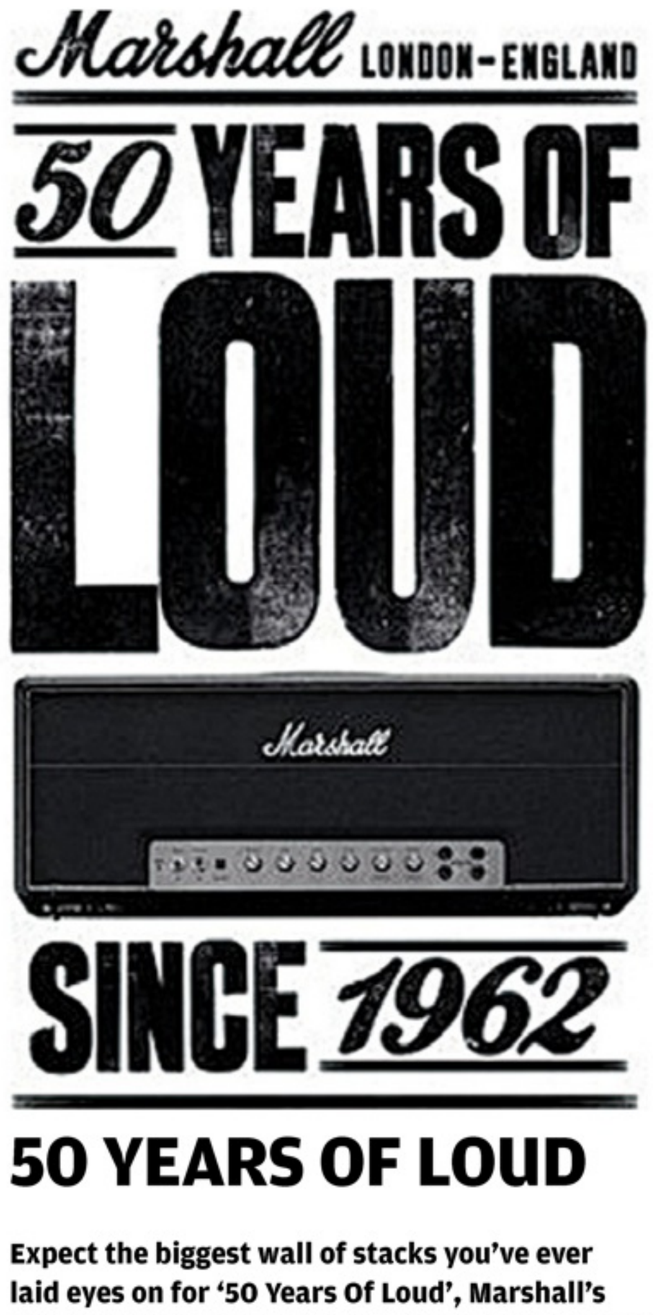
Fender has unleashed a handsome new set of upgraded models in their best-selling American Standard series. The Telecaster, Stratocaster, Precision Bass and Jazz Bass have all been given a makeover with the addition of Fender Custom Shop pickups and some other neat new design features.

Both comfort and tone are elevated for the new Telecaster (from £1,109) with a new ergonomic body contour and a fine new set of pickups – a Custom Shop Twisted Tele at the neck and a Broadcaster pickup at the bridge to be sure of a healthy bite. The Stratocaster (from £1,109) and Stratocaster HSS (from £1,149) both have aged plastic parts and some new pickups added; the Strat is equipped with Custom Shop Fat '50s for a beefier sound, and the Strat HSS has a Custom Shop Fat '50s in the neck position and a powerful Diamondback humbucking bridge pickup for extra rock-friendly action.

There's more for four-stringers, too. The Precision bass (from £1,169) and Precision V bass (£1,339) both now come armed with tasty Custom Shop '60s split single-coil pickups, and the newly improved Jazz, Jazz Fretless (from £1,169) and Jazz five-string basses (from £1,339) all arrive with Custom Shop '60s Jazz Bass single-coils. The Precision, Jazz and Jazz fretless basses all have the option of an enticing new jade pearl metallic finish too. See all the specs at www.fender.com.

The devil's work

Legendary six-string lothario Jimmy Page has released *Lucifer Rising & Other Soundtracks*, a leftfield collection of 'avant-garde compositions and experiments'. The LP includes an unused soundtrack written for Kenneth Anger's '70s short film, *Lucifer Rising*, in which Page made a cameo appearance. The heavyweight 12" vinyl album is available exclusively through Page's website. For superfans there's a limited run of 418 numbered copies, the first 93 of which will be signed. See www.jimmypage.com for more.



50 YEARS OF LOUD

Expect the biggest wall of stacks you've ever laid eyes on for '50 Years Of Loud', Marshall's Golden Anniversary celebration. The trailblazing amp manufacturer has announced big plans to toast their 50th with a killer line-up of acts at Wembley Arena on Saturday 22 September. Confirmed acts include Iron Maiden, Slipknot, Whitesnake, Chickenfoot, the Cult, Black Label Society and many more. Compering and helping with the event is Maiden's affable drummer Nicko McBrain, who's joined by a roll-call of guitar royalty including Joe Satriani, Yngwie Malmsteen and Paul Gilbert. 'This is truly a celebration of a British icon,' said McBrain. 'Jim Marshall and the team have shaped the sound of rock music for eternity! We're bringing together beyond-legendary artists for a moment in history.' Tickets: www.livenation.co.uk.

SUMMERTIME BLUES

Blues Fest have announced an unbeatable line-up for 2012

Who could ask for more than some top-notch blues to soundtrack their summer? It seems our prayers have been answered once again as Blues Fest 2012 has announced a superb line up for their 10-day event. The festival has grown a fair bit since last year's success, and the line up reflects this expansion with confirmed acts including beloved Rolling Stone Ronnie Wood, who curates a tribute to Chess Records and has also produced a specially commissioned painting for the event (above). Also performing are Van Morrison with his *Van Morrison Sings The Blues* show, John Hiatt, Ian Siegal, Mick Taylor, Matt Schofield, Robert Cray... even crooner Tom Jones is making an appearance. The festival takes place across venues in London and Manchester between June 26 and July 6. Tickets are available direct from www.bluesfest.co.uk or from Ticketmaster on 0844 844 0444.

The 5 Commandments

Eccentric metal guitarist John 5 is set to release his new CD/DVD *God Told Me To* through Rocket Science Ventures and Sony on May 8. The album features 10 cuts covering his mighty array of chops and is sure to further cement John 5's position as one of the most innovative and skilled guitarists populating the metal scene. The DVD, hosted by 'horror-host' Mike Odd, follows John 5 during recording and on tour, and the artwork was produced by fellow metal creative Rob Zombie. John 5 heads out on the road with Zombie in May on the Megadeth tour. Hop over to www.john-5.com for all the information.

Calendar SHOWS, GIGS, FESTIVALS, WORKSHOPS

Burnley International Rock and Blues Festival

MAY 4-6

Jimmie Vaughan's headline slot is reason enough to pay this festival a visit, but with a line-up that features Sugar Ray & The Bluetones, Nine Below Zero, Glen Tilbrook and Matt Schofield, it's a hit

WHERE? **Throughout Burnley**
TICKETS **£88.50 (three days). Day tickets available**
CONTACT **www.burnleyrockandblues.com; 01282 664400**

Norfolk & Norwich Festival

MAY 11-26

This year's eclectic festival promises King Of Twang Duane Eddy, violinist Nigel Kennedy and the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Events take place in some interesting locations including a tree-top hotel!

WHERE? **Venues in and around Norwich**
TICKETS **Prices vary depending on event**
CONTACT **www.nnfestival.org.uk**

Al Di Meola World Sinfonia

MAY 16-18

The legendary guitarist takes to the stage at Ronnie Scott's with his new 'acoustic global-fusion ensemble' band, World Sinfonia. Di Meola counts the new line up as 'the best group of musicians so far in his career' so it's definitely one for the diary!

WHERE? **Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club, Frith St, London**
TICKETS **£35-£60**
CONTACT **0207 439 0747; www.ronniescotts.co.uk**

Eric Johnson Tour

JULY 6-10

Six-string genius Eric Johnson has announced details of his forthcoming five-date UK jaunt performing tracks from his latest album, *Up Close* Expect to see a master of many genres at work

WHERE? **Holmfirth (6 July), Glasgow (7), Gateshead (8), Bath (9) and London (10)**
TICKETS **www.thegigcartel.com**
CONTACT **www.ericjohnson.com**

Woke up this mornin'... NEWS

New Limits from PRS

Hitting our shores right now are these two delectable new limited edition PRS deliveries, the characterful SE Custom Semi-Hollow with Bigsby and the luxurious SE245 Quilt Top. Plump for the SE Custom Semi-Hollow Bigsby (£825) and you've a choice of four limited edition finishes – silver sparkle, red sparkle, scarlet and black, limited to just 15 of each colour. The new look is completed by a novel new scratchplate and, of course, a nostalgic vibrato unit. Other features follow the original specs of mahogany back, maple top, 22-fret Wide Fat mahogany neck and SE Treble and Bass humbuckers, all controlled by a three-way pickup selector and volume/tone control. The SE Limited Edition SE245 Quilt Top (£699) has a mahogany back, a Wide Fat neck with a rosewood fingerboard and 22 frets inlaid with the classic PRS birds motif. Hardware includes a PRS-designed stoptail bridge and a neat duo of SE245 humbuckers with three-way selector switch. Lastly comes the big draw of this model – that deluxe quilted maple top, finished in a choice of six glorious finishes – whale blue, black cherry, grey black, vintage natural, purple burst and dark cherry sunburst (limited to 20 of each colour). There are more detailed specs at www.prsguitars.com.

GUITAR SHOW

The UK's longest-established guitar show is back again, offering another chance to indulge in a passion for everything six-string. This year the North West Guitar Show takes over Haydock Park Racecourse Exhibition Centre for their biggest event to date. With over 100 dealers and exhibitors in attendance, visitors will be able to buy, sell and trade new, secondhand and vintage gear to their hearts' content. There's the usual great live show too featuring Texas boogie woogie tribute act the ZZ Tops, Empress featuring Gavin Coulson, acoustic virtuoso Chris Woods, and Aaron Keylock, a 14-year old blues guitarist who would put most of us to shame. This unmissable event takes place on Sunday 20th May. Tickets cost £7 (under 12s free) 01925 813185; see more at www.guitarshows.co.uk.

Web corner THIS MONTH'S VIRAL GUITAR CLIP

Carl Perkins & Friends: *Rockabilly Session Part One*

HTTP://BIT.LY/SETMG

Carl Perkins' lively jam features some serious names including Eric Clapton, George Harrison and Ringo Starr. The session begins with a rousing rendition of *That's All Right*, punctuated by a great solo spot from Harrison; they then seamlessly morph into *Blue Moon Of Kentucky* and Clapton takes over, and finally it evolves into *Night Train To Memphis* to close. Some great outfits, too!

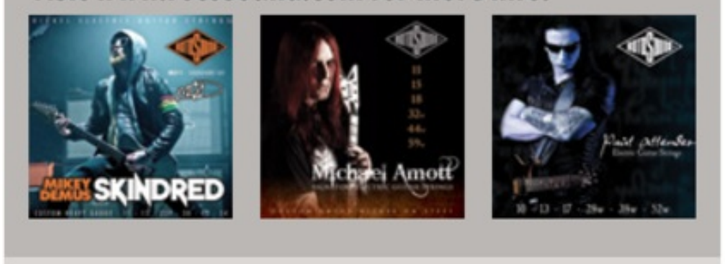
NEWS IN BRIEF

Bare Knuckle Tutorials

Bare Knuckle pickups have launched a series of four brand new video tutorials fielding frequently asked questions about pickups and tonal effects. The informative videos are written by Bare Knuckle's Tim Mills and cover the differences in performance between different pickups and switch positions, covered and uncovered sets and the effects that various magnets and hardware have on tone. The first video is up on YouTube now. Visit www.bareknucklepickups.co.uk for the URLs.

Rotosound Go Metal

Rotosound has got together with some of the biggest names in metal to bring us a new range of signature strings. With sets from Carcass's Michael Amott, Cradle Of Filth's Paul Allender and Skindred's Mikey Demus, headbangers are free to string up their axes just like their favourite pro. Visit www.rotosound.com for more info.

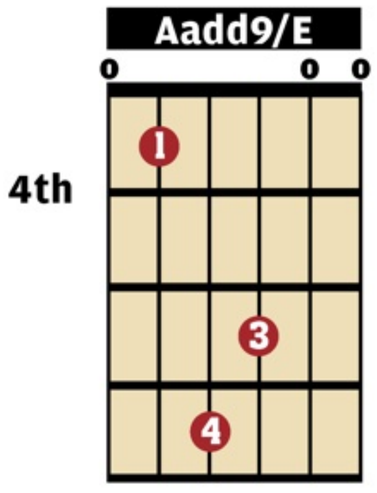


iRiffport

App lovers can now swiftly turn their iPad, iPhone or iPod into a practise amp and effects processor using Pocket Labworks cunning new iRiffport (£79). For use with electric guitar or bass, the user-friendly iRiffport is a digital audio interface that will work with most guitar amp apps including PocketAmp, PocketGK and Garageband to give you a high-quality sound without any fuss.

The Lost Chord

Here's a voicing of Aadd9/E with a 'chiming' major second interval between the open B and C# on the third string. Play the chord one note at a time to make the most of this. Resolve this chord by moving the shape down two frets to form a voicing of Em with a unison of two Bs.



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Soundtrack of my life

Oli Brown

Having taken his own brand of young man's blues to the very top of the table, we ask Britain's favourite fledgling guitar slinger where he found his inspiration

Let's not put too much pressure on the lad, but it looks like the future of British blues is assured in Oli Brown's hands. He first picked up a guitar in 2002, and only two and a half years later, at the tender age of just 15, he was touring America supporting names like Buddy Guy and Taj Mahal. Recently the great king-maker of guitar heroes himself, John Mayall, asked him to stand in for his indisposed six-stringer when the Bluesbreakers were booked to play a festival in Jakarta. His third album *Here I Am* reveals a maturing songwriter and an increasingly commanding frontman armed with an adroitly-honed sense of when to turn in some fretboard flash and when to dig out some soul.

Jimi Hendrix

VOODOO CHILD – THE JIMI HENDRIX COLLECTION

If it wasn't for Jimi Hendrix I wouldn't be playing the guitar now. Music never really spoke to me until I heard his songs. I know it's a compilation, but this is the record that influenced and inspired me when I started playing and it really was the one album that made me decide that I wanted to be a musician.

The Black Keys

BROTHERS

I never really gave the Black Keys much of a listen but I bought this album and now I'm a huge fan. Everything about it has such class. The songs are so well-written, and the sounds they create really are unique. It's been an influence on my style ever since. Now, I'm collecting their back catalogue, too.

Tom Waits

MULE VARIATIONS

Some of my all-time favourite songs are on this album. It's my travelling soundtrack – always playing when I'm alone at airports, on trains, or anywhere really. It's hard to pick one Tom Waits album as so many of them are just so good, but recently this album has been on my rota more than the others.

Chris Cain

UNSCHEDULED FLIGHT

For me he's one of the greatest guitar players alive – just listen to *Helping Hand*. His playing is unreal, it flows like a stream of thought and is so natural. He's got so much soul and class. He's been a real inspiration to me. I feel the jazzier side of blues can often lack a bit of bite, but Chris Cain has nailed it.

The Derek Trucks Band

SONGLINES

When I was on tour with Blinddog Smokin' a few years ago this was on repeat during ALL our long journeys around America. There was a non-stop 21-hour run and we still never got sick of this album. The way he has incorporated the Indian style of music is stunning. I'd love to hear him make another one like this.

Sean Costello

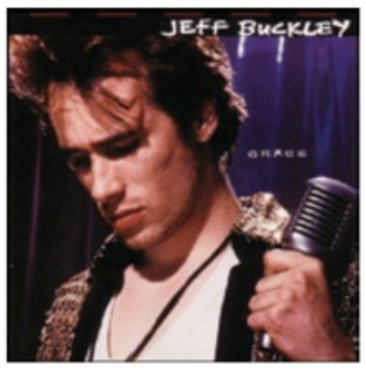
SEAN COSTELLO

Sean, RIP. An amazing singer, songwriter and guitar player – get his whole catalogue, you won't be disappointed, but this is where he came into his own as a songwriter. *Double Trouble* from *Cuttin' In* first turned me on to Sean – it's haunting sonically and vocally, and the guitar solo is my all-time favourite.

Jeff Buckley

GRACE

It's such a shame there wasn't more of Buckley. His voice is just hypnotic. You can't help but fall into a trance listening to his melodies and lyrics. His 1983 Telecaster is actually up for sale and has been listed for ages at Chelsea Guitars, NY. If it wasn't for the £29,000 price tag I'd have it!



Jon Cleary & The Absolute Monster Gentlemen

JON CLEARY & THE ABSOLUTE MONSTER GENTLEMEN

I love Jon's take on the New Orleans sound – such a great evening soundtrack. I had the pleasure of meeting him at a gig and he spent hours giving me advice and even played a song I requested. Their version of the Meters' song *Just Kissed My Baby* is amazing.

Reef

GLOW

I never really knew much about Reef until the recording of this last album. We were searching for reference points, and this came up as an example of similar sounds and a more aggressive take. There's great sounds throughout – in the instruments and vocals. It's definitely been an inspiration.

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IN ASSOCIATION WITH Vintage

Jackson duo

Two contrasting new Jackson models this month. First, the £670.80 Mille Petrozza signature 'Phobia', a thrash monster with an EMG 81 active humbucker, 24 jumbo frets and a recessed Floyd Rose special bridge, and second the monochrome SDX Adrian Smith X Series (£430.83) in snow white with basswood body, H/S/S pickup configuration, Floyd Rose vibrato and some tasty black hardware – a duo of fantastic models that'll suit the most discerning of metallers. See www.jacksonguitars.com...

WE'VE BEEN AD...

FENDER KEEP US GUESSING

While Fender's range of electric guitars and amplifiers are amongst the most iconic rock items in existence and we're pretty sure that for the most part they sell themselves, surely photographing them while still in their boxes was taking it that one step too far. This vexing advert for five shining new Fender products tested the water. The poster tells of three amazing new features added to their guitars – some spanking humbucking pickups, a special tilt neck, and the new adjustable trussrod, no less. There's also exciting talk of the release of three fantastic new amps. Sounds great, doesn't it? We love a good box as much as the next man – and these five are corking examples – but we're struggling to 'see' the difference in anything here...

Tales from the road
Blame Game

The cautionary tale of when **Adi Vines** found himself and a rather rare amp forced between a rock and a hard place

Here's a tale of two cities, namely London and Bath. Although they're 116 miles apart, both places are home to a branch of the well-known guitar dealers Vintage & Rare Guitars. These shops have been a fixture for a long time so I was surprised and shocked to recently find out that the company Vintage & Rare Guitars (Bath) had gone into liquidation.

I discovered this fact in a rather alarming manner when I contacted Vintage & Rare's store in London's West End to enquire about the return of a valuable limited edition amp that the store had been unsuccessfully attempting to sell on my behalf. I was told that the item had been previously transferred to the store in Bath but was now part of a consignment of stock that V&R had no access to, as a dispute had arisen between them and the owners of the former premises in Bath, and as a result a number of items were being withheld from them.

> My amp, which I had delivered in mint-in-box condition, was scuffed, scraped and covered in filth

Now, I'm not an expert in company law; in fact I'm completely ignorant of the intricacies of limited companies and so on, but I did know one thing – disputes like this can drag on for years. So, I wanted my property back ASAP. Despite the fact that I had a signed and dated consignment note from Vintage & Rare Guitars accepting the amplifier from me and taking responsibility for it, there was very little they could do. In reply to my anger, the most they could offer was a name and a phone number in Bath, and I was advised to go it on my own.

When I contacted the opposite party, and after being subjected to their side of the argument, I found them surprisingly helpful, and upon supplying the paperwork I travelled up to Bath to collect my item. I was destined to be shocked and angry once again when I got there. My amp, which I had delivered in 'mint-in-box' condition was now bereft of packaging, scuffed, scraped and covered in filth, and the control panel was dirty and stained. I was assured that this was the state the amp was found in. I was also later assured by the London V&R store that the item was still in perfect condition while it was in their possession. So, while I now have a rare amp that has been significantly devalued, neither of the main players in this sad drama is prepared to accept responsibility for this negligence and, as of the time of writing, the argument still rolls on.

I also learned from the Bath end of this dispute that I am not alone and that there are a number of items being held on behalf of consignees like me – persons who may have no idea that their items are no longer the subject of V&R's terms of sale and 'best endeavours' to find buyers, but are locked away awaiting their owners to come along and claim them. If you are a customer who is wondering why your desirable vintage or rare instrument has remained mysteriously unsold, this may be the reason. Although I hope that I am the exception, my experience would seem to show that at some point in the chain of responsibility these items may have been subject to damaging conditions – so if I were you, I'd claim my property now. Before a potentially bad situation gets worse.

Adi Vines has worked with Radiohead, the Sex Pistols, the Darkness, Razorlight and others. See www.xselectronics.co.uk

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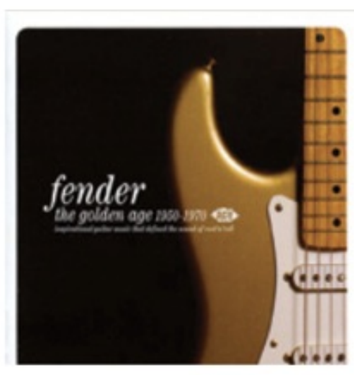
Album reviews

Bonnie Raitt
SLIPSTREAM
Proper

After a seven-year hiatus, Raitt's new offering is a rapturous return as she gracefully weaves her silky smooth funk-blues feel around cuts from Bob Dylan, Gerry Rafferty, Loudon Wainwright III and Joe Henry. With the utmost repose she reveals why *Rolling Stone* put her in their 100 Greatest Guitarists, and with a luscious vocal to match she imbues these tracks with a heavenly personal touch.

Various Artists
FENDER: THE GOLDEN AGE 1950-1970
Ace

Intended to go with Martin Kelly's book of the same name, this anthology covers an extremely fruitful period of music history with Leo Fender's iconic instruments at its core. Whether it's the Shadows, Buddy Holly, Johnny Cash, the Beach Boys, Jeff Beck or any of the varied artists on this album, the range of tones and styles these guitars helped create is a joy to behold. Pretty much unmissable.



Larry Carlton Trio
THE PARIS CONCERT
335

He overcame being shot in the throat by a stranger, he's won four Grammys amid numerous nominations, he even wrote the much-lauded theme to *Hill Street Blues*; now with Travis Carlton's bass chops and Toss Panos' eloquent rhythms filling the other two thirds of his trio, Carlton takes the roof off the New Morning Club at this 2008 show. With a truly kaleidoscopic display of slick-fingered fireworks, it's a no-brainer.

Todd Snider
AGNOSTIC HYMNS & STONER FABLES
Aimless

If you're a fan of the acerbic wit, the biting narrative and the scuzzy Americana that Snider has got down to a tee, you'll be pleased to know he's at his level best here. Funny, cutting and curiously addictive, Snider rips the seams of his chosen topics wide open and shows you around like a local. Here, he covers religion, bankers, the idle youth... even the Glimmer Twins get a (complimentary) look in. Sweet and sour.

Sean Taylor
LOVE AGAINST DEATH
SGO Records

For his fifth effort, Kilburn's Sean Taylor bravely steps up to the heady subjects of politics and equality. *'I'd rather die on my feet than live here on my knees'* he sings as jaunty opener *Stand Up* sets the mood. Sure they're protest songs, but each has a dusky spring to its step that demands your unflinching attention. Taylor's husky, upfront vocal adds a subtle bite that lurks behind this set of well-crafted tunes.

Walter Trout
BLUES FOR THE MODERN DAZE
Provogue

21 albums down the road and Trout continues to astound. As ever, his command of the strings is impeccable, charming us with a feel that takes *Modern Daze* way up there with the giants of the genre. Lyrically, it delves into the shortcomings of modern life aided by some of the most expressive licks known to man. Trout's a big hitter in the blues-rock big league and he's set this year's bar high for his peers.

SNAP JUDGEMENTS

State Of The Union
STATE OF THE UNION
Reveal
The blues guitar skills of Brook Williams and writing talents of Boo Hewerdine are good bedfellows in this vibey acoustic affair. Cool Pet Shop Boys cover, too!

Justin Townes Earle
NOTHING'S GONNA CHANGE THE WAY YOU FEEL ABOUT ME NOW
Bloodshot
Earnest and world-weary, here's a delicate and yearning set of Sunday morning fare

Ledfoot
GOTHIC BLUES
Hypertension
Ledfoot's haunting imagery and spooky slide dwell on the shadowy side of blues, but this is run through with a passion that's hard to ignore

Lee Ranaldo
BETWEEN THE TIMES AND THE TIDES
Matador
One half of Sonic Youth's six-string blitz enlists some alt-pros to help him weave a deeply atmospheric album with a nice slant

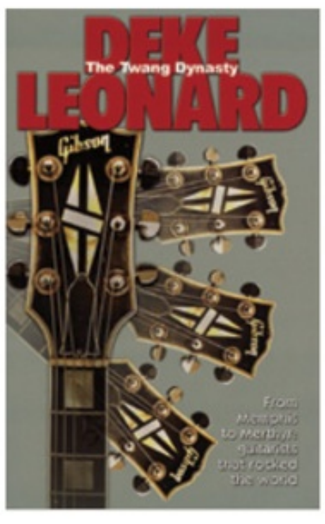
Savage
SONS OF MALICE
Minus2Zebra
It's taken them 10 years to recharge their hard-rock batteries but Brit heavy metal big guns Savage have regrouped for a pounding aural assault

Simon McBride
NINE LIVES
Nugene
With a live show like this, Irish blues-rock young gun McBride proves all those Rory Gallagher comparisons hold some weight. A fast-rising star

Book of the month

The Twang Dynasty
DEKE LEONARD
Northdown Press

The former Man guitarist muses over the lineage of players that shaped modern guitar playing, from Robert Johnson to Alexis Korner. A personal and engaging view of guitar history, cut with amusing anecdotes aplenty.



Fender afloat

Fender Musical Instruments Corp has announced that it will be floating a proportion of its shares on the US Nasdaq stock exchange in an attempt to raise $200 (£126m) to reduce its $240 debt. Since Leo Fender founded the company in 1946 Fender has gone through various owners including CBS, who famously took over in 1965. Since then ownership has been transferred to various investors including US private equity firm Weston Presidio who currently hold around 43 per cent of the brand. Fender is the largest instrument manufacturer in the United States, with last year's sales amounting to over $700m, and the company intends to tap the huge markets opening up in Asia, particularly in China and India.

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Photo by Sandrine Lee

THE ROUND SOUND

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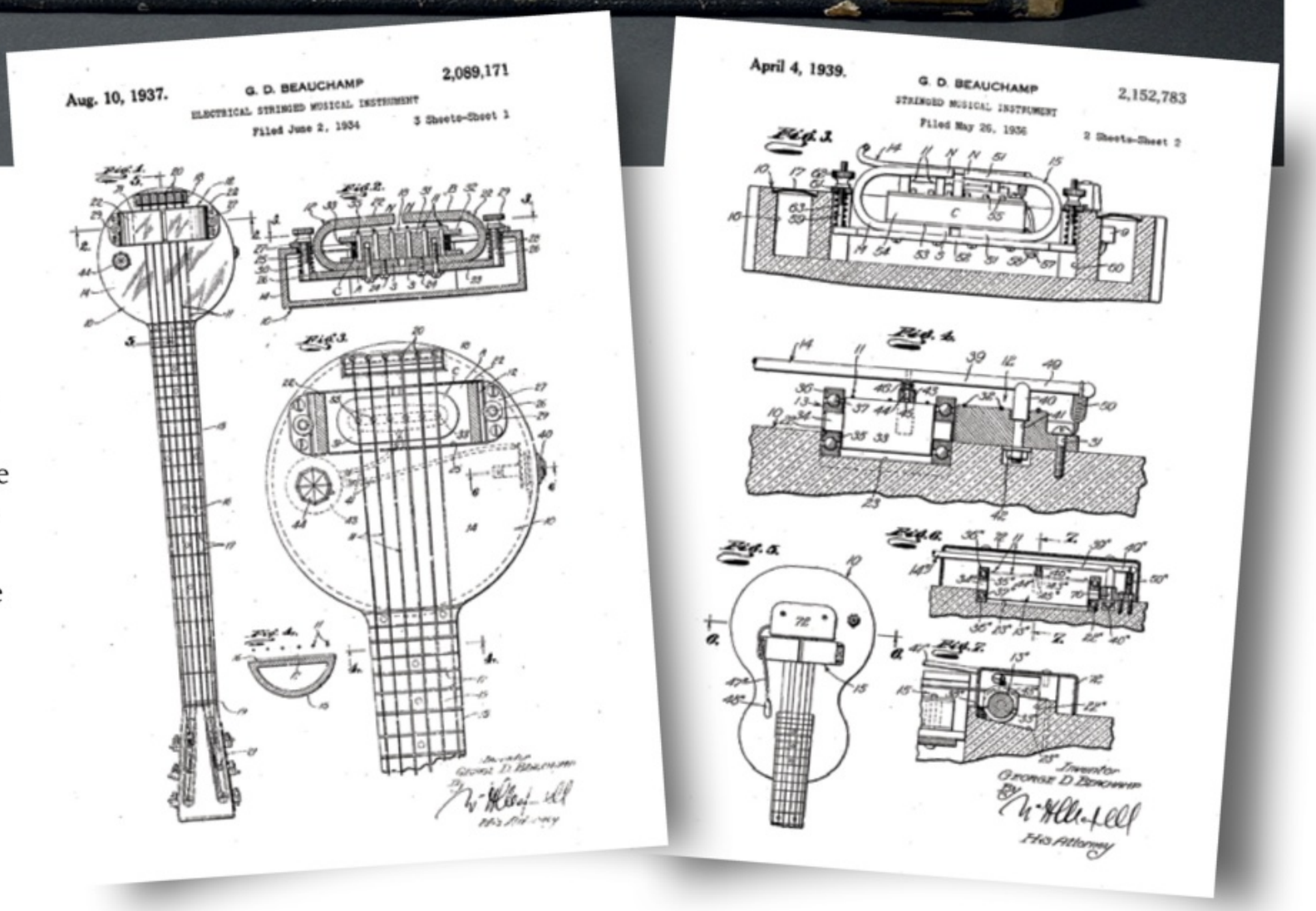
Sheer MAGNETISM

The first magnetic pickups were single-coils – and despite 80 years of expanding scientific knowledge, that template still drives music forwards. **Richard Purvis** finds out why the twang still reigns supreme

The Frying Pan lap steel with its 'horseshoe' pickup was the world's first usable production electric



Thank goodness for the humbucker. When Gibson's two-coil marvel arrived in 1957, guitarists were finally able to wave goodbye to all that horrible background noise and let the purity of their tone shine through for the first time. No more low-frequency buzzing every time you got too close to your amp, or happened to face the wrong way while telling the drummer to wipe the slobber off his chin. Single-coils were suddenly obsolete. It was a revolution.

Except that it wasn't. Humbuckers are everywhere but they never did take over the world, and neither has anything else since – walk into any guitar shop today and you'll see lots and lots of single-coil pickups, most of them closely based on designs drawn up just after WW2. It's the equivalent of black-and-white television surviving the arrival of colour... and digital, and HD.

Are guitarists really that conservative? Or is there something about those early pickups that makes them progress-proof? This is our tribute to the simple genius and apparently invincible appeal of the single-coil – from its quirky origins in the early part of the last century to the current mania for new ones disguised as old ones. It's a story with many characters... and none bigger than Leo Fender, who once said: 'I would go through thousands and thousands of pickups hunting for the best possible way there is to make one.' Over 60 years later, it's looking as if he might just have succeeded.

Violas got there first

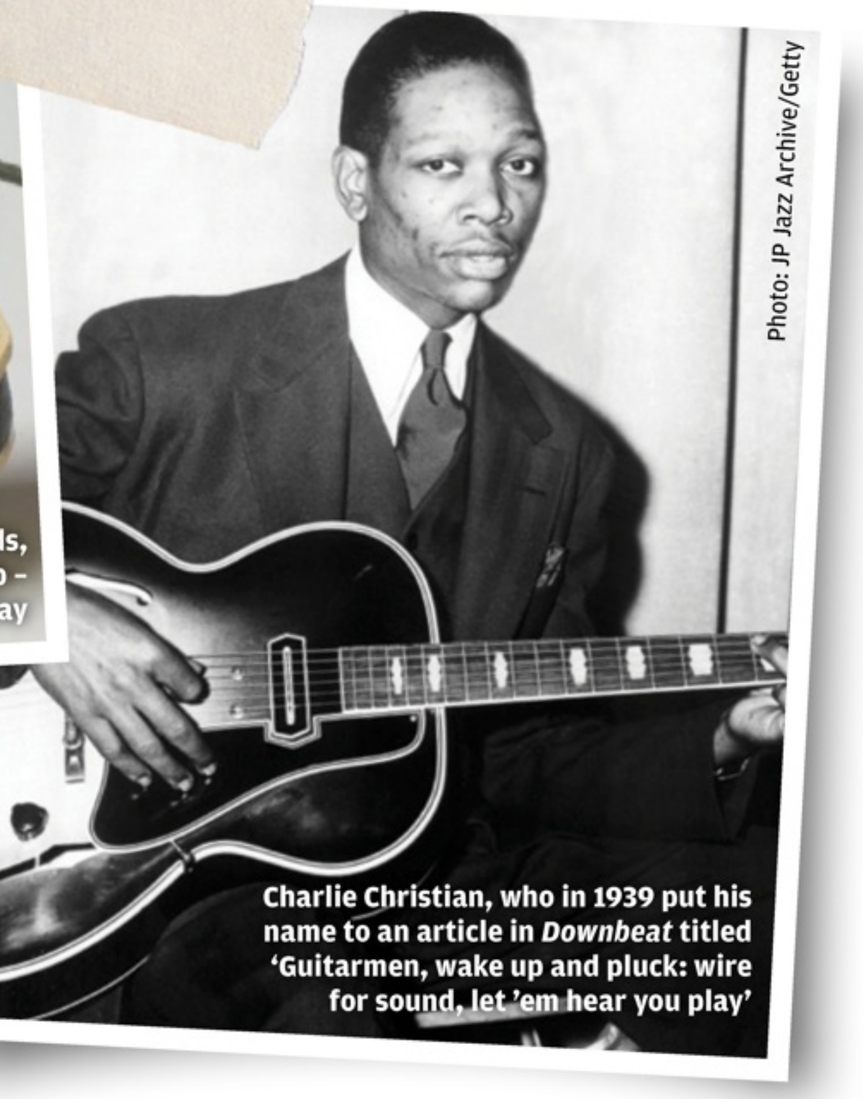
The early history of the single-coil pickup, which is effectively the early history of the electric guitar, begins with the discovery of electromagnetic induction – that is, the generation of electrical current through changes in a magnetic field. But there's no clear moment of 'invention' for the coil-based musical instrument pickup, just a series of small developments that begin with various people wrapping wires around magnets and end with Clarence Leonidas Fender giving up his accountancy career.

'The Gibson Charlie Christian pickup was lighter than a horseshoe, and it didn't block your right hand damping' – Jason Lollar

We do know that one of the real pioneers was a talented young musician and composer who designed instruments in his spare time... and was working, as it happens, for Gibson. We're a long way from the Firebird X yet, though – this was the early 1920s, when the Michigan-based company was still specialising in mandolins, and the instrument in question was actually a viola. Lloyd Loar was the engineer behind this novel contraption. A proper renaissance man and something of a mystic, Loar had been advising Gibson on technical matters, as well as composing music for their travelling 'Gibsonians' bands, since 1911. His electric viola – a solidbody, by the way – had its bridge resting on a steel plate with a wire coil underneath. Loar's paymasters were not impressed enough to take his idea any further, but the same principle was soon being applied to guitars, notably in 1928 by Chicago firm Stromberg-Voisinet, their pickup being attached to the soundboard. But none of these innovations really took flight, and the main reason seems to be that, by all accounts, they sounded like poo. There was one more breakthrough to

The Gibson ES-150 of 1935 was the first production electric Spanish guitar

Though unwieldy by today's standards, the 'CC' pickup sounded superb – and is still sought-after today



Charlie Christian, who in 1939 put his name to an article in *Downbeat* titled 'Guitarmen, wake up and pluck: wire for sound, let 'em hear you play'

Photo: JP Jazz Archive/Getty

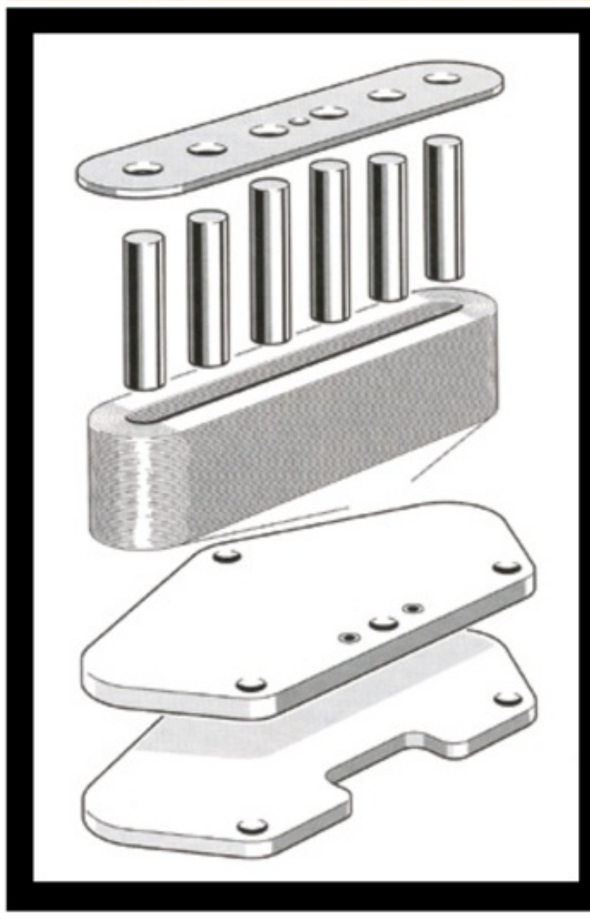
come, and it would be made by the company later to be known as Rickenbacker.

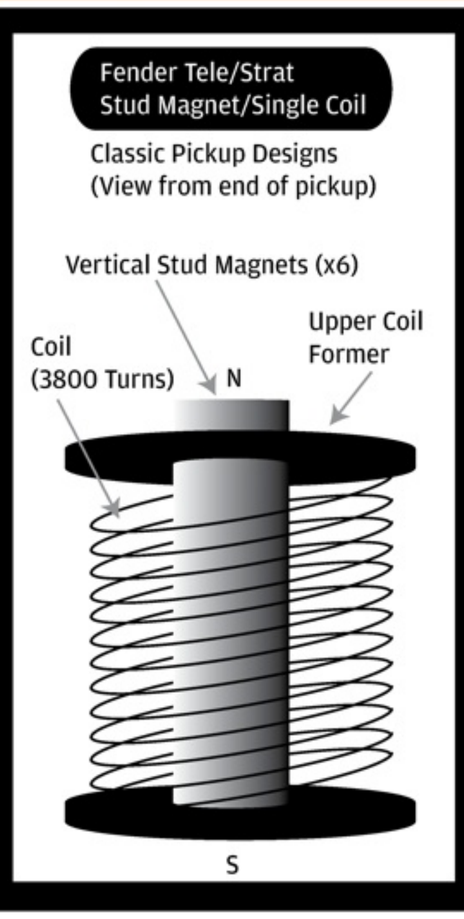
The big innovation of George Beauchamp and Paul Barth's famous 'horseshoe' pickup, fitted to the Ro-Pat-In A-25 and A-22 lap steel guitars launched in 1932, was that it didn't rely on secondhand vibrations coming through wood but sensed them directly – thanks to two large magnets curving around both the coil and the strings. Beauchamp had experimented with multiple coils, winding them with a contraption built from the motor from his own washing machine, but finally settled on a single-coil design; it was wrapped around six polepieces, and underneath the horseshoe part these pickups look uncannily like the Fender designs that would change the world 20 years later.

Ro-Pat-In was not an instant success story – they only sold 17 guitars in 1932 – but now the general idea was catching on. By the mid-'30s, country and swing players like Bob Dunn were electrifying their steel guitars and producing some of the first-ever recordings of electric instruments. And then Gibson came back into the picture. In 1935, they enlisted swing king Alvino Rey to help create what would be their first successful guitar pickup; the final design, attributed to Gibson's own Walter Fuller, appeared the following year on a very significant guitar, the ES-150. This non-cutaway archtop was taken up by jazz virtuoso Charlie Christian, who is perhaps more responsible than any other musician for turning the electric guitar into a genuine lead instrument. Why? Because he was brilliant, and he was amplified. The ES-150's hexagonal-shaped pickup, featuring a coil of copper wire wrapped around a single steel 'blade' polepiece with two long bar magnets tucked inside the guitar's body, was soon dubbed the 'Charlie Christian pickup'.

'The Charlie is much lighter than a horseshoe and the magnets don't block your right hand from damping the strings,' explains Jason Lollar, founder of Lollar Pickups, whose current range includes an accurate recreation of Gibson's breakthrough model. 'A similar design was used on several Gibson lap steels, and it was also produced on related budget brands like Recording King. It's a little easier to mount than a horseshoe-magnet pickup like you'd find on old Rickenbackers, Epiphone Electars or Vegas.' The Charlie Christian unit wasn't perfect but Christian made some great records with it, and the single-coil electromagnetic guitar pickup had arrived.

Single coil pickups HOW THEY WORK





First, the basic principle: vibrating steel strings disturb a magnetic field and thus create an alternating current in a wire coil. The main advantage of having one coil rather than two is that the pickup is 'reading' the vibrations from a shorter portion of the string – known as its magnetic window – allowing for a more sharply defined tone.

The classic Telecaster bridge pickup design, first seen in 1950, consists of six Alnico polepieces with something like 9000 turns of insulated copper wire wrapped around them, two fibreboard plates holding it all together, some string covering the wire and a copper-plated steel baseplate underneath – this last part is optional, and there's some debate as to why Fender included it, though its magnetic contribution is often cited as a key ingredient in Tele twang. The two ends of the coil are anchored in the lower fibreboard plate, where they can be wired up for amplification. The polepieces can be staggered in height for inter-string balance or, as in the early years, lined up flat.

The Tele's neck pickup was designed along similar lines, but with a chrome-plated brass cover and smaller dimensions – put simply, the coil doesn't have to be so big because there are more vibrations closer to the middle of the string-length. By 1954, however, frugal Fender must have given up worrying about the difference as the Stratocaster's three pickups were identical. Some modern Strat sets have an overwound bridge unit to compensate.

Fender's Broadcaster/ Telecaster pickup was mounted in the bridge to speed production

Leo Fender's tonal tastes included extreme treble and the sound of the steel guitar

The DeArmond 200, as bought in by a number of companies, including Gretsch

The P13 aka 'speed bump' single coil, designed by Walter Fuller. This version was licensed to Harmony

Gibson vs Fender

The next generation of pickups would be more compact again, aided by a new family of magnetic alloys from Japan known as Alnico. These are the models that defined – and continue to define – popular music. You probably know the story: Gibson came up with the P90, Fender came up with the Telecaster and suddenly all the under-30s in the western world had funny haircuts. Actually, it wasn't quite that simple. The original replacement for the Charlie Christian pickup was the P13, introduced in 1940 – and there are three reasons why this Walter Fuller design doesn't deserve to be forgotten. It was the first Gibson unit to use Alnico magnets, the first to get individual polepieces, and the first to be mounted close to an archtop's bridge for a more biting tone. Punk rock! The P90 itself, sharing the P13's twin bar magnets, arrived in 1946. Fuller's masterpiece has been in continuous production ever since, but it's perhaps not as influential a pickup as it might have been. Certainly its role in the formative years of rock'n'roll was huge – its snappy tone fuelled the careers of Scotty Moore, Carl Perkins and Eddie Cochran (who replaced the neck-position Dynasonic in his Gretsch with one) – but it was sidelined in 1957 when Gibson yanked it out of its flagship Les Pauls in favour of the new humbucker.

'When I think Tele I think raw, punchy, biting lead tone and a warm, woody rhythm sound' – Seymour W Duncan

By this time there were a whole bunch of established contenders in the electric guitar market, each with their own take on the single-coil. They included Gretsch, Rickenbacker, Danelectro... and yes, we're there at last, Fender. It's easy to imagine that wartime hardship had a part to play in the evolution of Leo's no-frills philosophy. 'Building items during this time was difficult because of war restrictions, so we mostly had to use scrap materials,' he revealed later. And what did he

Single-coil Pickups TIMELINE

1932

The Ro-Pat-In A-25 and A-22 'Frying Pan' electric lap steels go into production

1936

The Gibson ES-150 appears with a blade-style single-coil aka the 'Charlie Christian'

1943

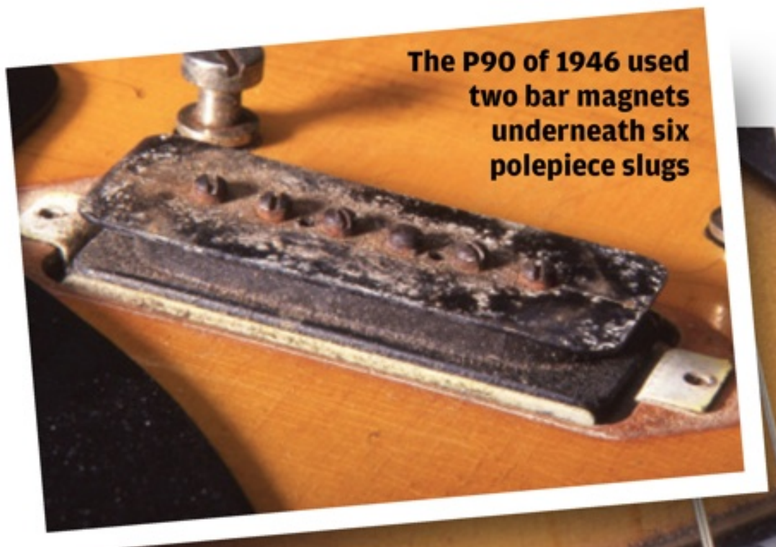
Leo Fender designs his first pickup which appears on the early K&F lap steels

1946

Gibson gets ahead of the game by launching the Walter Fuller-designed P90

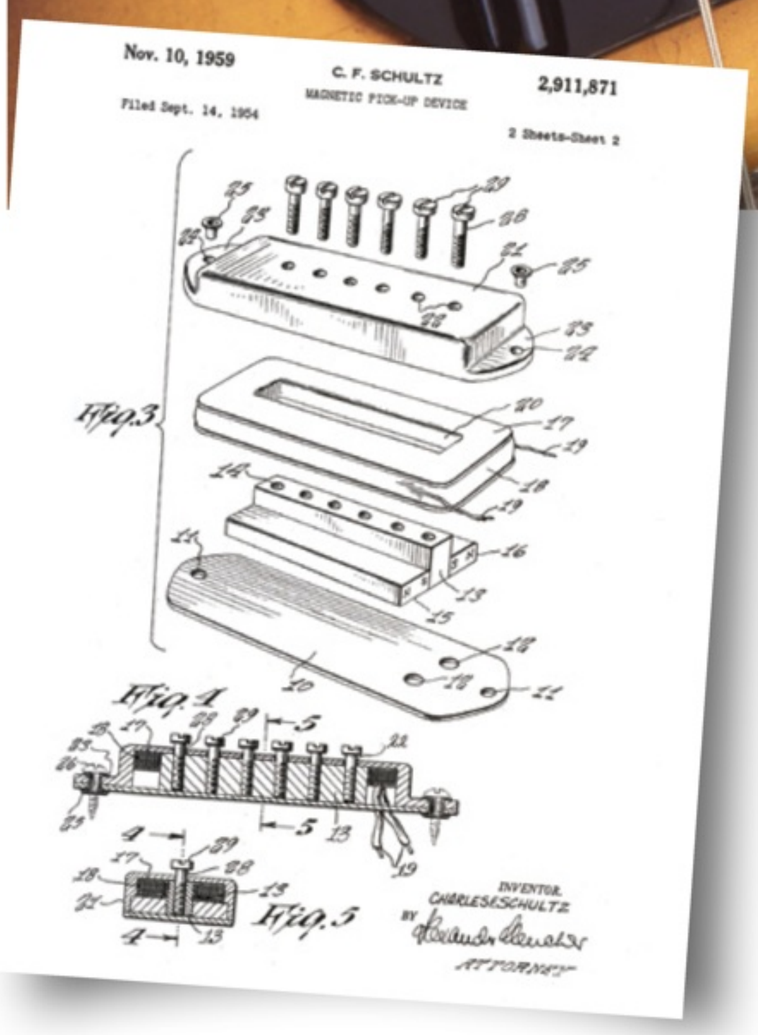
1949

The DeArmond 200, aka Dynasonic, appears on Gretsch guitars



The P90 of 1946 used two bar magnets underneath six polepiece slugs

The purest home for the P90 pickup was the Gibson Les Paul Junior



turn all this scrap metal into? An instant classic. Thinner in profile than the P90 for a more focused tone, and with the magnetism coming from the polepieces themselves rather than any separate bars lurking underneath, Fender's pickup proved a heavenly match for the design of his futuristic new solidbody guitar, soon to become known across America and beyond as the Telecaster. 'I think he hit on the design just by imagining what would be easy and cheap to make, and he came up with a winner,' says Lollar. 'That family of pickup designs – typical Fender single-coils – have a unique tone due to their coil geometry and magnet type, shape and placement. The design itself creates the spanky, clear, chimey tone we all think of as being what a Fender guitar sounds like.'

Revolutionary in so many ways quite apart from its electronics, the Telecaster could reasonably be described as the guitar that made modern music possible. But while it was a success from the start, most notably finding favour with country-leaning sidemen such as Jimmy Bryant and later James Burton, it was the more glamorous Stratocaster – with specially revoiced pickups, and three of them – that really secured the future of the single-coil concept. Buddy Holly was rarely seen without a Strat in the late '50s, Dick Dale and Hank Marvin used its twangy treble response to maximum effect in the early '60s; and by the time Jimi Hendrix started setting fire to the poor things in 1967, Fender had nothing to worry about. Gibson's humbuckers were now well established, and the PAF-powered Les Paul Standard would be back the following year, but single-coils had defined the sound of rock – and rock was here to stay.

Staying single

But was it a narrow scrape for Leo? Was there ever a real danger that we were moving into a two-coil world? It's not as if the plank-like Fenders with their crude and noisy pickups were massively undercutting their luxuriously-built rivals. The Strat was launched in 1954 with a list price of $249; at the end of the decade you could still get a Les Paul for $265. So they were competitors – if you could afford single-coils, you could afford humbuckers. 'The Les Paul didn't hurt Tele and Strat sales,' says Lindy Fralin, another of the great American pickup-winders. 'People still chose single-coils when there was a humbucker option. If I could go into a shop ➔

Duncan ON FENDER

We asked Seymour W Duncan, undisputed top dog of the aftermarket pickup business, to give us his take on vintage single-coil tone...

'First of all, there are a lot of different single-coil tones,' he says. 'When I think of a Tele, I think of a raw, punchy, biting lead tone and a warmer, woodier rhythm sound; when I think of a classic Strat, I think of a bell-like chime. And there are a lot of other classic single-coil tones: Fender's Jazzmaster and Jaguar offer interesting takes, the Gibson P90 is a big and fat single-coil tone, the old Danelectro lipstick-tube pickups have a bright and jangly tone... but regardless, the more important factors will boil down to the design of the pickup, the materials used to construct it and the skill of the craftsman who winds and assembles it.

'Personally, I love the old Fender designs and I go to great lengths to make my vintage single-coils just like Leo's. Abigail Ybarra' – a Fender pickup-winder since 1958 – 'has visited my shop and we've compared notes... she helps me in the same way Seth Lover helped me with humbuckers. But there are always folks attempting to design a better mousetrap.'

1950

Launch of the Fender Broadcaster, soon to be known as the Telecaster

1954

The Fender Stratocaster ups the ante with three single-coil pickups

1955

Birth of the Danelectro 'lipstick' pickup, housed in a real lipstick tube

1956

Rickenbacker starts replacing its 'horseshoe' pickup with the 'toaster top'

1957

The Fender Precision gains a split-coil pickup... and Gibsons get humbuckers

FRET-King by Trev Wilkinson

Black Label 'DBC'

"The way the Eclat DBC guitar rings, even acoustically, is just incredible. I love P90 pickups – and I have done ever since I saw Steve Marriott and Mick Ralphs using them – so the Wilkinson W90B is the business. The thumb scoop is a great idea too, and it allows me easy access to those high frets, even when the guitar is slung really low.

The DBC is exactly what it says it is – a pure rock 'n' roll guitar, and I'm pure rock 'n' roll; I love it!"

Dave 'Bucket' Colwell

Guitarist magazine

★★★★

'Anyone need a raw rock machine? This is it'

Dave Burrluck, Guitarist magazine.

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Black Label Eclat 'DBC'

A hard working and hard playing rock guitar-meister, Bucket's talents have seen him playing to thousands of fans across the globe in his tenures with Paul Rodgers' Bad Company, and working with the likes of Humble Pie. A songwriter of note too, Bucket has written for Iron Maiden, and latterly with his Bucket & Co. project cooperated with the likes of Steve Conte, Edwin McCain, Danny Bowes, Spike from The Quireboys, Jaz Lochrie and Adrian Smith.

The DBC is a no-fuss rock machine inspired by a workhorse instrument Bucket has played for years.

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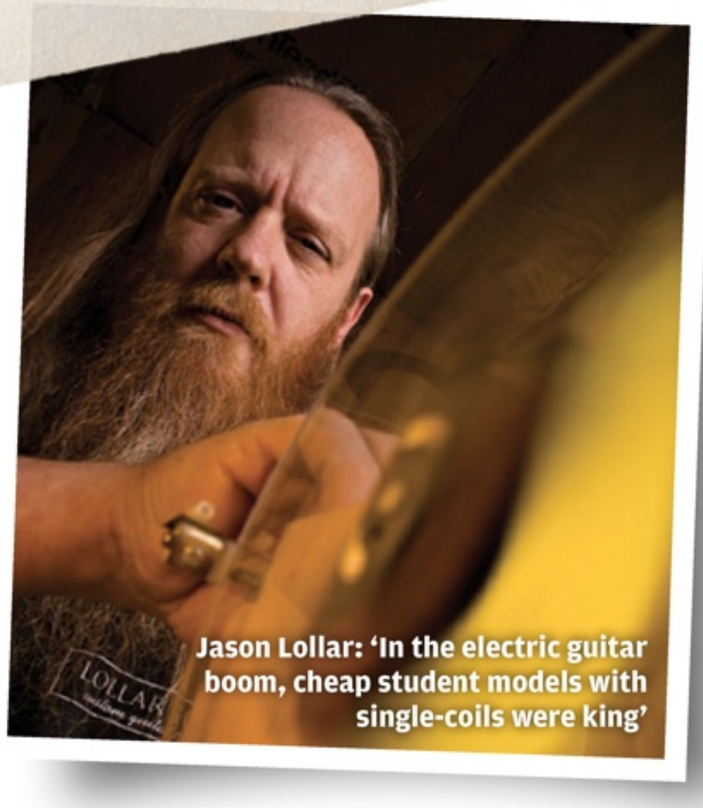
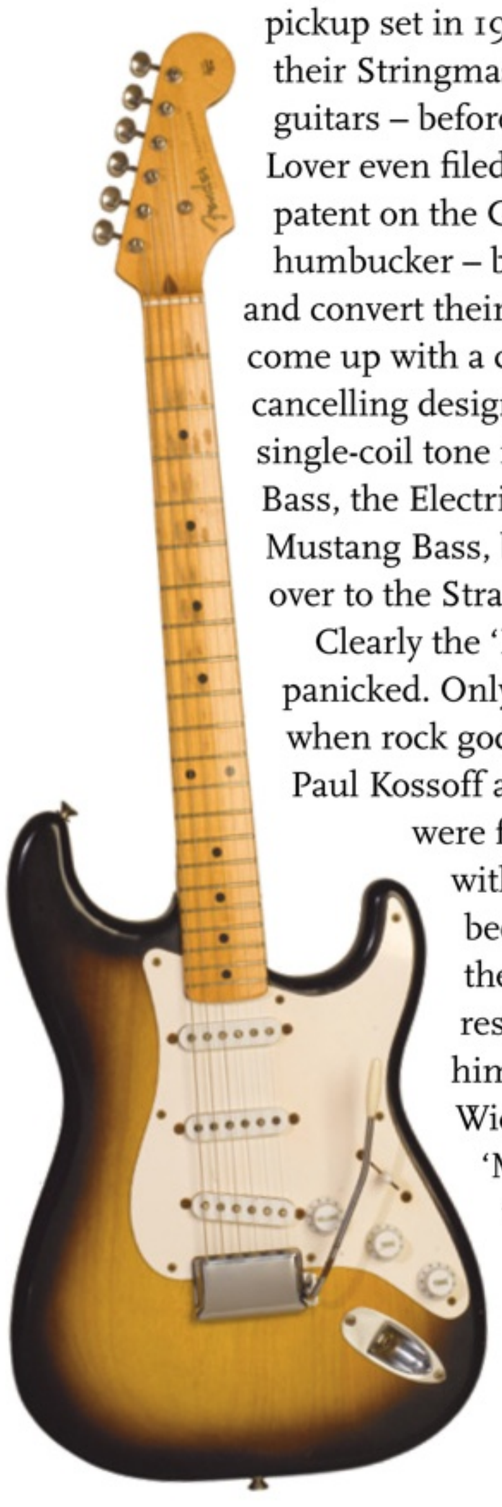

Jason Lollar: 'In the electric guitar boom, cheap student models with single-coils were king'

in 1959 and try out a new Les Paul, a new Tele and a new Strat – not knowing that the Gibson would one day be worth more than my house – I'd choose the Strat. Single-coils are just more pure, efficient and accurate.'

That's easy for a modern-day tonehound to say, but it's unclear to what extent the average guitarist in the early days of rock was bothered about such details. You need to look beyond the Fender/Gibson battle to find the other main factor behind the single-coil's survival, as Lollar explains: 'One reason single-coils didn't become obsolete is that humbuckers are more expensive to produce. If you examine the electric guitar boom of the '60s and '70s, most guitars made were Teiscos, Kays, Silvertones, Lyles, Venturas, Electras – cheap student models where the single-coil was king. Fender started using a humbucking pickup set in 1953 on their Stringmaster steel guitars – before Seth Lover even filed his patent on the Gibson humbucker – but they didn't run out and convert their guitars. They did come up with a couple of hum-cancelling designs that still had a single-coil tone for the Precision Bass, the Electric XII and the Mustang Bass, but it never crossed over to the Strats or Teles.'


The Strat burst onto the scene in 1954 with an unheard-of array of three single coils

Clearly the 'Big F' was far from panicked. Only in the early 1970s, when rock gods like Jimmy Page, Paul Kossoff and Mick Ronson were flattening small towns with their massively beefy Les Paul tones, did they feel obliged to respond, poaching Lover himself to design the Wide Range humbucker. 'Maybe the single-coil was at its least popular stage then – people started putting humbuckers in Strats,' says Lollar. But this was fashion, not obsolescence. The clucking Strat would be the sound of the '80s, and now even Gibson's neglected gem is enjoying a popularity surge, as Lollar points out: 'The P90, one of the noisiest single-coils, went from essentially the trash-bin to being one of the premier designs being used today.'

'I think Fender imagined what would be cheap and easy, and came up with a winner' – Jason Lollar

Scatter-brained Leo

The science of pickup-winding is a daunting subject because there are so many variables, from the gauge of the wire to the magnetic material (even Alnico comes in four different flavours). One issue that's sure to get any winder wound-up is the automation Fender adopted soon after the CBS takeover in 1965. To some, a machine is an efficient way to create consistent-sounding pickups; to others, any coil whose wire has not been guided on by hand is a cold, mojo-free zone.

One British maker who swears by the old 'scatter-wound' approach is Bare Knuckle Pickups founder Tim Mills. 'With Fender, the windings start getting more consistent in the early '60s as they're using a better counter,' says Mills. 'By the CBS years they're trying to have 7500 winds on Strat pickups so everything starts sounding ferociously bright. With early Strats it depends on the hands of the person doing the winding. The scatter-wound pickups are more dynamic, open and responsive, with better clarity.'

'There's an art to coil-winding,' insists Fralin. 'I compare it to tuning racing motors – you're combining different factors and balancing everything, and if you do one thing wrong the sound is missing something. You're dealing with magnet strength, capacitance, inductance, reluctance, eddy currents... I don't know what all of them mean! But there's a magic in there. I think they knew what they were doing back then more than people do ➔

Spencer Mumford: 'Vintage pickups are not hard to replicate if you've got the right materials'

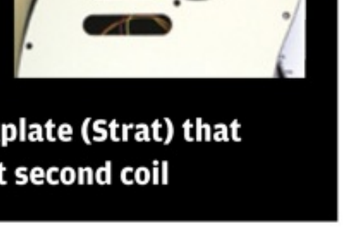
Other ways TO BUCK THE HUM

Boffins have long been looking for ways to get rid of background noise without concession to the purity of the classic single-coil tone. Here are some of their best efforts so far...

Lace Sensors

Used by Eric Clapton throughout the '90s, Lace Sensors use a 'field barrier system' which basically means the coil is shielded by metal plates

Split coils



Designed by Leo Fender and based on the P-Bass design, the G&L Z-Coils system has two coils of opposing polarity hearing three strings each.

Stacked coils

Hide one coil beneath the other and you can keep your skinny magnetic window. Examples include the Fender Noiseless series and Gibson's unmissed P100

Kinmans

Aussie pickup innovator Chris Kinman uses a combination of techniques including both magnetic shielding and differential stacked coils without the usual tone-cancelling of opposed magnets

Dummy coils

An extra 'pickup' with no magnet will remove the hum without adding to the signal. Alembic pioneered this method on basses and guitars, along with active electronics, in the 1970s

Suhr/Ilitch noise-cancelling systems

This hi-tech solution involves fitting a new scratchplate (Tele) or backplate (Strat) that effectively works as a giant second coil

SMASH HIT SINGLES

Five great moments in rock history that just wouldn't have cut it with humbuckers

Elvis Presley: That's All Right (1954)

More than just a breakthrough single, this was the track that woke up teenage America – thanks in no small part to the frisky flourishes of Scotty Moore and his P90-driven Gibson ES-295

The Jimi Hendrix Experience: Little Wing (1967)

Forget Hendrix the fuzzed-out rock god – it was when Jimi kept his Stratocaster clean that he really changed the game, bringing a new level of sophistication and downright prettiness to the art of rock guitar

Lynyrd Skynyrd: Sweet Home Alabama (1974)

Arguably the greatest intro in musical history, courtesy of the underrated Ed King. The out-of-phase Strat sound may have been horribly abused in the '80s, but this was its sweet and clucky pinnacle

The Smiths: This Charming Man (1983)

You may think of this indie milestone as the all-time ultimate Rickenbacker riff; Johnny Marr actually claims to have played it on a Telecaster. Either way, you just don't get this kind of chiming articulacy with humbuckers

Dinosaur Jr: Freak Scene (1988)

Three years before Nirvana lit the grunge touchpaper, it was J Mascis and his slacker pals who gave them the matches. From the breezy yet chunky intro chords to the ridiculously distorted solo, this noise-pop classic is all Fender Jazzmaster

Lindy Fralin: 'There's an art to coil-winding. I compare it to tuning racing motors'

'There's a magic in there. I think they knew what they were doing back then. Nobody's been studying coils since the '50s' – Lindy Fralin

now. Really, nobody's been studying coils since the '50s.'

That brings us to the current fad for so-called relics. Messing up paintwork is one thing, but a lot of people also want their new instruments to *sound* just like the old ones – either as they are now or as they were when they were new (which is a whole other debate). Spencer Mumford of Shed Pickups, another respected British winder, has a neat line in 'aged' pickups, complete with rusty polepieces and scuffed bobbins. To him, it's all in the details – right down to the thickness of the insulation on the copper wire. 'Strat pickup wire originally had two layers of lacquer, so that gives you four layers between each turn of wire, which is quite a gap,' he notes. 'It gives a more open sound. Also, I've tracked old coil-wire under a microscope and the Formvar coating can be quite flaky, so it feels rough when you're winding it. Modern wire with a plain enamel coating sounds quite different. But vintage pickups are not hard to replicate if you can get the right materials.'

Liquid pickups, anyone?

So that's the past and the present sorted... which just leaves the future. The obvious question, after six decades with barely a tweak to the way most pickups are made, is whether Leo Fender's formula for single-coil tone is now embedded in our brains like the smirk of the Mona Lisa – and therefore fixed for eternity. 'It's nearly always the visual side that seems to be the stumbling block,' suggests Tim Mills. 'Some younger players don't care about that, and I think we'll see changes. You've got eight-string guitars, fanned frets – it's exciting. I'm making a lot of pickups for seven, eight and even nine-string guitars.'

Lindy Fralin agrees, pointing out that two of his current designs – the Split-Blade and Hum-Cancelling P90 – wouldn't have been possible without newer, stronger materials than Alnico, while Spencer Mumford is thinking on even more far-out lines. 'I've got a design using ferrofluids,' he reveals. 'The top of the pickup has a tank holding the fluid and a magnet underneath. If you bend the string, the fluid moves with it so you don't get any fade-out. One day I'll get round to making it... but I couldn't tell you how it'll sound!'

Perhaps there's no hurry to find the next great pickup design. This may be the age of home recording, where many of us spend our evenings in front of a big LCD monitor doing the 'single-coil shuffle' – trying to find the one position where our pickups will shut up for long enough to get a decent bloody take – but Teles, Strats and Juniors are not going out of fashion. For most guitarists, it seems it's worth having the noise to have the tone.

At the start of this feature, we drew an analogy between the single-coil pickup and black-and-white television. In fact, it's more like photography: nobody would deny that colour is technically superior, but many professional snappers still swear by monochrome because it offers a greater sense of tonal depth and contrast.

Much as we all love humbuckers, a good single-coil pickup has the same kind of magic – and dagnabbit, you only hear the hum when you stop. So just keep playing!

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Photo: Matt Mindlin

Slip & Slide

Bonnie Raitt bounces back with her first album in seven years, *Slipstream*, with her trademark Fender Stratocaster in hand plus a little help from guitarists including Al Anderson of NRBQ. Interview by **Julian Piper**

Bonnie Raitt has long been an enigma. Raised on an early diet of Mississippi Fred McDowell and Jack Daniels, over her long career she's balanced an obsession between early Mississippi delta blues and delivering million-selling ballads like *I Can't Make You Love Me* that could be straight out of the Karen Carpenter songbook. But don't be fooled – turn your back and this pint-sized bundle of flirtatious charm becomes the tough Strat-toting seductress that most of us know and love.

'I would carry a half-pint of Jim Beam in the pocket of my jeans like a badge of honour'

Bonnie Raitt's trump card has always been her slide guitar playing; few can perform electric bottleneck with her mixture of raw emotion and the sensual sonic edge that she coaxes from her old Fender Stratocaster. Just a few minutes of watching her in the company of an old master like the late John Lee Hooker is guaranteed to raise the chill bumps. The woman oozes soul and sass in about equal measure.

Now, after a seven-year recording hiatus, she's back with a new album, *Slipstream*. With her long-time touring band on hand and a clutch of great songs by several of her favourite writers including Paul Brady, Gerry Rafferty and Bob Dylan, the tracks sparkle with an energy that would put most performers several decades her junior to shame.

About to embark on a mammoth five-month Stateside tour – her first in five years – and speaking from her home in the Bay area of San Francisco (and sounding a bit husky, presumably from one too many rehearsals) Bonnie begins by recalling her early days as a teenager, copping licks from Son House and Mississippi Fred McDowell.

'I had such a great musical upbringing,' she says. 'My folks loved Ray Charles and Mahalia Jackson, we watched the Beatles on the Ed Sullivan Show like everybody else, then on the radio Tennessee Ernie Ford was there right next to the Beach Boys; it was such an exciting time. But there was always this parallel track. I had an ear for Chuck Berry, Ray Charles and Ernie K Doe... I recognised that white artists like Pat Boone were just copying the original stuff. It was clear to me that the roots of the music I loved were in pop as well – there was moving music and movie music!

'But when you heard those early records out of New Orleans, even as a kid you could discern that rhythm when it was done right. It was a fantastic time to watch that crossover happening – I got a lot of my Muddy Waters and Slim Harpo songs not from hearing the Newport Festival, but from the Rolling Stones. I'd save up my pocket money and it was a real quandary whether to spend my four dollars on the latest Dylan album or the Stones.' ➔

Gear

Guitars
Fender 1965 Strat in open A, three Fender signature Strats, several Guild flattops, Gibson ES-175 w/P90

Amps
Bad Cat Black Cat 30R 1x12" combo

Effects
Boss CS-2, ProCo Rat. Her slide was cut from a Mateus wine bottle

Although she was raised in California – Bonnie's father John Raitt was a prominent actor – she began her college days in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She was introduced to folk music through attending Quaker summer camps ('my role model was Joan Baez because of her activism and involvement with the civil rights movement') but things changed when she came across handsome young bluesman John Hammond Jr. 'I saw a photo and just fell in love with him!'

At Cambridge she became enmeshed with a stable of blues artists working with promoter Dick Waterman. One of a handful of fanatical blues-obsessed white college kids, Waterman took it upon himself to manage the legends – veteran players like Bukka White, Fred McDowell, Skip James and Son House.

'I got to hang out with Son quite a bit and he wasn't drunk all the time, as is sometimes portrayed,' Bonnie recalls. 'But kids would ply blues people with booze so they could put the tape recorder on; it was all very exploitative. Dick recognised the exploitative side and took them all under his wing at Avalon productions so they wouldn't get undersold; they were all elderly and he wanted them to be treated right.'

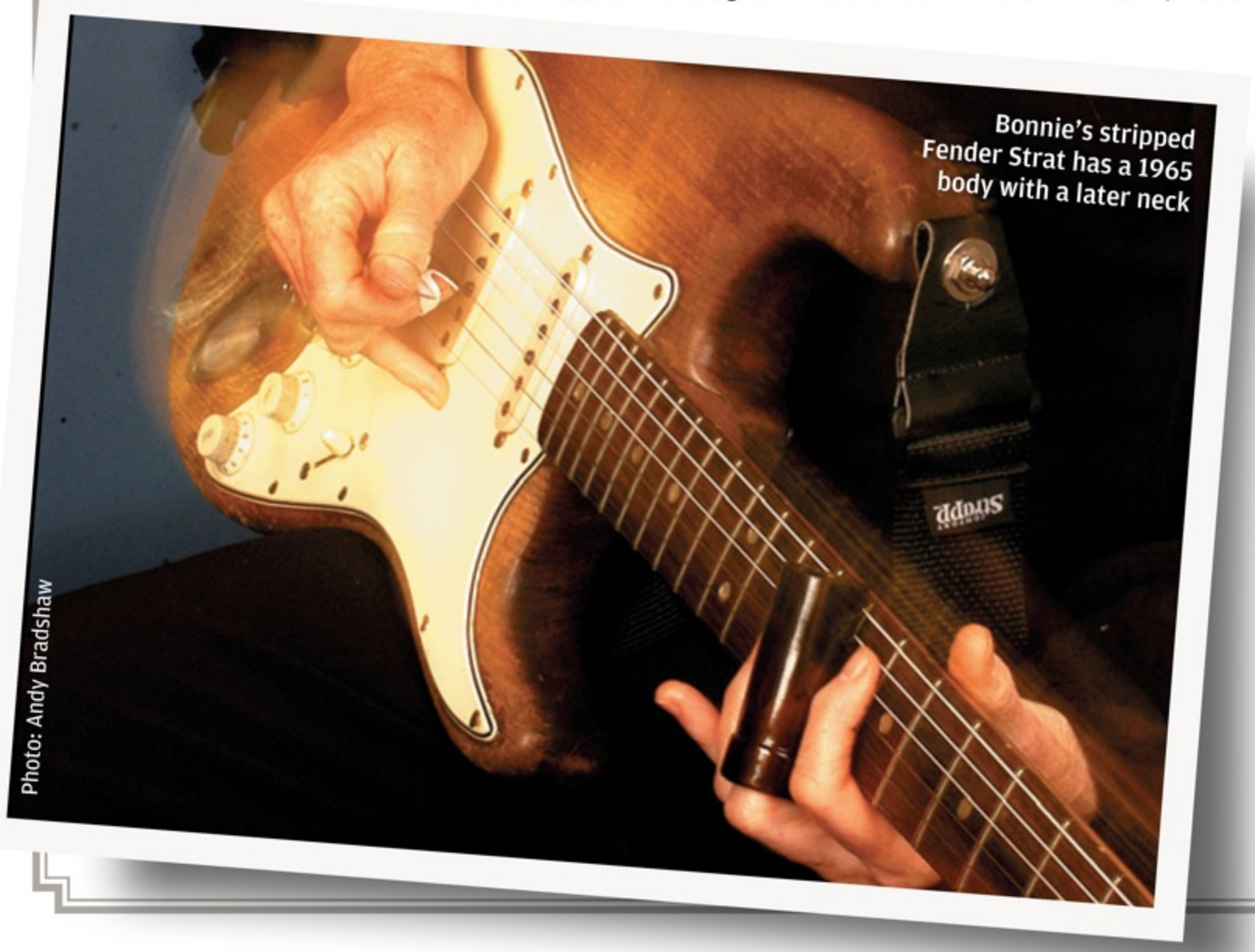
On Raitt's early albums, her voice was a lot higher than it is now. 'I thought my voice was pretty wimpy,' she laughs. 'But at the beginning I only looked on it as a hobby. I'd taught myself to play in my room and wasn't really performing. Then when I started out doing some gigs – and Dick would slot me in to do a support slot with one of the blues guys – I really felt hampered by this wimpy soprano voice; I really felt embarrassed by the mismatch of my voice and how tough I felt inside. I tried to remedy that by learning to drink and smoke with all these old guys I was hanging out with, carrying a half-pint of Jim Beam in the back pocket of my jeans as a badge of honour; I was trying to get my voice to sound old enough to sound like Etta James. By the time I was 27 or 28 it got a bit more disorientated, and by my 40s it was beginning to sound like I felt.'

Raitt's signature Strat, now discontinued, had Texas Special pickups and an extra-narrow neck

'If I hadn't been able to play well, just being a woman wouldn't have gone too far'

Bonnie's favourite performer of the time was Mississippi Fred McDowell, a man whose songs she still often pulls out onstage for a display of her slashing slide dexterity. 'What a blessing to have been friends with him, he taught me so much about slide guitar,' she enthuses. 'I guess maybe he was flattered that this funny little 19-year old girl was hanging around him all the time. He was absolutely a ladies' guy, but he loved his wife Esther Mae and had her name written on the back of his guitar... but he still loved to flirt.

'I was learning Fred's material before I met him, but the one thing I did learn was the C position in open ↔



Bonnie's stripped Fender Strat has a 1965 body with a later neck

Photo: Andy Bradshaw

A Compressed AFFAIR

Put the late Lowell George of Little Feat in the same studio as Bonnie and the sparks invariably flew. 'Lowell and I were pretty close but it could be like locking horns!' she says. 'One thing I do have to thank him for is getting me to use a compressor – I've used one ever since.' At times, listening to Bonnie pull out her seamless slide lines, the spirit of Lowell seems to be smiling down.

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Listen up

BONNIE RAITT
Nick Of Time
1989
With Don Was at the helm Bonnie delivers a clutch of killer songs, all underscored with some sensational slide guitar playing

BONNIE RAITT
Slipstream
2012
Her latest outing finds Bonnie pitting guitar solos with Al Anderson of NRBQ. The woman's still got it!

And another thing...

A long time political and ecological activist, Raitt has been arrested twice in anti-logging protests and has performed at San Quentin prison

A; if you play that shape that's when you get the IV chord, and it was a big revelation. Other than that I played by ear, and I think he was delighted – as were BB, John Lee and Muddy. They liked my tone and liked my touch; maybe they got a kick out of the fact that I was a woman, but I think it went beyond that. If I hadn't been able to play well it wouldn't have gone too far.'

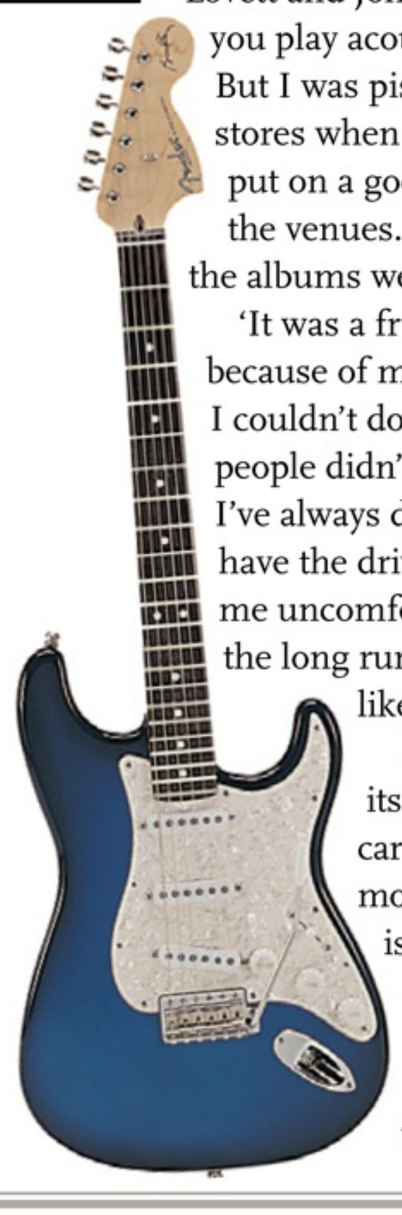
These days as a nine-time Grammy winner, a Rock'n'Roll Hall Of Fame inductee with tens of millions of album sales under her belt, Bonnie Raitt's become something of an institution in American music. But it wasn't always so easy. Her self-titled and very bluesy first album emerged in the early '70s on the then-indulgent Warner Bros label, home to Bonnie's friends Little Feat and Ry Cooder. 'My albums sold pretty steadily during the '70s, but I knew Emmylou Harris and would compare our albums and wonder why mine weren't doing so well,' she admits. 'It was frustrating, and then in 1981 my foray into rock'n'roll didn't please the big corporate guys at Warner. People like myself and Van Morrison weren't bringing the big bucks – so they dropped us.

Photo: Andy Bradshaw

'Fortunately I could still make a living as an acoustic artist, and I used those gigs to fund going on the road with my band. It's the same for Jackson Browne, Lyle Lovett and John Hiatt – if you play acoustically you can always gig in a folk club. But I was pissed that my records often weren't in the stores when I was touring. I felt that I did my part – put on a good show, did all the interviews, sold out the venues. The least they could so was to make sure the albums were there for my fans.

'I didn't have the drive to be a huge star. I always wanted to be in it for the long run'

'It was a frustrating time. In retrospect it was because of my decision to oversee my business, and I couldn't do it all. I didn't have a hit record, but if people didn't like what I recorded, it didn't bug me. I've always done music on my own terms. I didn't have the drive to be a huge star, it would have made me uncomfortable; I've always wanted to be in it for the long run. I'd rather emulate the careers of people like Meryl Streep and Tony Bennett.'



Bonnie's 1989 album *Nick Of Time* with its self-penned title track provided the career success she needed; the album was a monster. However, on *Slipstream* her name is conspicuously absent from the writing credits. 'When I was inspired to write back in the '90s I was amazed I found the time, but I had some stuff I wanted to say and I knew that musically I could come up with something; *Nick Of Time* was inspired by a real set of circumstances I was going through. I'm really proud of the 20 or so songs I've written, but during this particular songwriting hiatus I've been more excited by other people's songs.

'Choosing what to record is always a daunting prospect, so I go back to the songwriters I resonate with – Gerry Rafferty, Paul Brady, Richard Thompson – and, on this album, Al Anderson of NRBQ. Al was the lead singer and guitarist of the band and we shared a lot of bills together in the '70s; they're one of my favourite bands, and it was great to have the chance to jam with him on the album.'

Although Fender honoured Bonnie some years back with a signature Strat, making her then the only female guitarist on their roster, being in it for the long run is something that could equally well be applied to her trusty brown Stratocaster, always fitted with heavy .013"-.056" strings. Bonnie bought the guitar in 1969 for $120 and it's appeared on every show with her since. 'Why change it if it's not broke ?' she chuckles. Bonnie's never been a guitar collector – it conflicts with her Quaker values. She sometimes uses a Gibson ES-175, and on *Slipstream* she used her original old Guild F50 acoustic along with several newer Guilds tuned to open A, Ab and G.

'As I've got older my voice has got lower, so I need lower tunings,' she explains, and then grins. 'Plus, these days I can afford a guitar tech!'

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Mauving On

He's a technical whizz who has proved himself countless times and with many different bands. Steve Morse tells **Rik Flynn** about his new project and how he's finally got a set-up that doesn't compromise

If you need proof of the chaos theory, look no further than Steve Morse. A childhood epiphany came when his ears were awakened to the sound of a fingerpicked Dixie melody floating on the air at a country fair. That one innocent 'butterflies' wings' moment was all it took to set him on the path to becoming one of the world's greatest living guitarists – a force of nature, if you will. Since then he's mastered pretty much every style in the book, and as a result he's turned his hand to... well, just about all orders of musical expression available to him.

There's been his early incarnation in Dixie Dregs; his own Steve Morse Band; a brief stint in Kansas; a near-20 year tenure in Deep Purple; and strumming his flamed top Buscarino acoustic as part of new-age duo Angelfire. Every time, he's revealed a depth of sonic weaponry that makes up one of guitar world's most comprehensive arsenals. Now, with the help of some equally-skilled comrades – drummer Mike Portnoy (Dream Theater), keyboardist Neal Morse (Spock's Beard), bass virtuoso Dave LaRue (Dixie Dregs, Steve Morse Band) and a new talent, Casey McPherson – he's venturing upon landscapes anew with widescreen prog-pop project Flying Colors.

How can one man span so many different styles so successfully? 'I've never been able to define things and put them in boxes, so I don't see great differences in style between any of the bands that I work with,' he offers. 'To me it's all tonal music. From pop to Lynyrd Skynyrd to classical, all follow the same rules.'

From the flavours on display in Flying Colors' eponymous debut Morse has had to call upon many different modes of playing, in part due to the disparate cast of musos that make up this group. How did the idea for Flying Colors come about?

'Neil Morse had been known to me for years, and people always asked me why I didn't play with my brother!' jokes Morse. 'I explained that he wasn't my brother, but that I liked his music and I thought we could get together. Our executive producer Bill Evans came up with the idea of putting Kerry Livgren [ex-Kansas], Neil and myself all together, working on a sort of prog-rock extravaganza.'

Sadly when Livgren had a stroke Steve and Neil had to go it alone, but after a day and a half of thrashing out ideas they'd done enough to make him proud. Soon after, they'd handpicked a band. Nine more days, and they'd cooked up an album of sophisticated prog-rock with an addictive pop sheen. Sheesh.

Here we have four seasoned vets with a proven track record and a singer, Casey MacPherson, from a completely different generation... how did it all gel together? 'Neil and I wrote a lot of music very easily and quickly together, but everybody in this band has done their own albums,' explains Morse. 'We wrote a song on the first day and another on the second. It was that easy! It was a little like too many chefs in the kitchen at times, but the ideas are all really good.'

Most people take years to find that elusive chemistry, let alone nail an album in less than 10 days, but Flying Colors have managed an assured and melodically involving debut. Was it majority rules when it came to choosing which ideas stuck and which ones were binned?

> *'To me it's all tonal music. Lynyrd Skynyrd, classical... it all follows the same rules'*

'Not really. For example, we had one song with a great funk feel and everybody loved it except Casey. With him being younger he just thought it sounded too stylistically time-stamped, so we tried to come up with something that everybody liked. That was the challenge. I wouldn't say it's better... just better *for the group*. I encouraged everybody to bring in an idea, not a song, and let the band go with it. For the most part that's what we did.'

The album embraces old and new, order and experiment – something that's without doubt largely to do with Morse's figured fretwork. 'I was experimenting with different sounds and pickups each time we went through a track,' Steve explains. 'In the end I used a lot of the basic track parts and edited them. For example, in *Love Is What I'm Waiting For*, when I did a sort of Brian May solo, I kept that from the original track.'

Does Morse try and mix up styles when approaching a project like this? 'Yeah, I think I do. Basically I use a "pick every note" approach. It allows me to play intervallic things or linear things. I do it in every style. I just did what I thought would fit... I didn't really think about it too much. In *Love Is What I'm Waiting* ➔

Gear

Guitars
Musicman Steve Morse Signature Y2D, Musicman baritone, Steinberger 12-string

Amps
Engl Steve Morse Signature 100

Effects
TC Electronics Toneprint-enabled Flashback Delay and Hall of Fame Reverb

Photo: Joey Pippin

Flying Colors: (l-r) Dave LaRue, Neil Morse, Steve Morse, Casey MacPherson and Mike Portnoy

Listen up

FLYING COLORS
Flying Colors (2012)
Morse's new supergroup combined their collective skills to create a prog-pop masterpiece that's opened up another musical path for him to tread. Five minds, one great album!

DIXIE DREGS
Unsung Heroes (1981)
The Dixie Dregs' fifth album earned Morse and co a Grammy nomination for Best Rock Instrumental Performance, and with an opener like *Cruise Missile* this is Morse at his spectacular best

For we had a kind of Beatles feel, and I thought while we're in that vein maybe it could do with a progression that was reminiscent of a mixture between *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and Queen.'

Steve's artistic reach has extended to helping to develop the equipment he uses, and thanks to TC Electronics he's had a hand in designing his ideal pedals. 'I was using a Memory Man delay up until TC let me totally write the program,' he details. 'I'd been talking to effects companies in vain trying to get exactly what I wanted, so when they finally asked me, I was so happy. With my band and with Purple I use two TC Flashback Delays. I went in a studio with the guy who has all the parameters in his computer and just sat there and designed the effect! I got to define the modulation, waveform type and amount of EQ degradation. I duplicated the sound of my expensive rack delays that are all getting broken! They're unfixable because they used proprietary chips that are no longer made anymore.'

Morse certainly knows how to get the best out of a simple effect. 'When you dial the effect up to full there's no dry at all, and that's the way I use them. I have a dedicated second amp that's only for effects, no dry signal goes through it. There's a short and a long delay. The short one is really more like a stereo chorus sound.'

So what other tricks did he use to manipulate his sound on this record?

'I used a few different things, like an EBow in some of the verses to simulate that ultra-long feedback and that same sound with distortion. In one tune I used a chorus of three baritone guitars. There were also a few spots where I did backwards guitar.'

Morse doesn't just experiment with technique – he also gets very serious with his guitars. Van Halen wasn't the only one to mix and match in order to build his perfect axe: back in the day Morse used to rock his heavily-modified 'Frankenstein' made up of a Tele body, a Strat neck, a Gibson Tun-O-Matic bridge, a 12-string tailpiece and constantly evolving pickups. His Musicman signature Y2D began as a production model based on that guitar. As guitars go, it looks like there's a lot going on...

'No, not really,' Morse qualifies. 'To other people, it probably looks pretty complicated! It's just a simple five-way switch that gets all the sounds that I basically use live – but when I'm recording I use all the pickups and lots of combinations. There's lots of possibilities so I have the opportunity to try a different pickup and different levels of distortion.'

'I've never been happier with my sound. I just need to find something interesting to play!'

Perhaps this is why Morse remains almost entirely faithful to one guitar. His onstage set-up is carefully thought out too. 'It's a hybrid set up. The amp is basically a simple tube amp... although some people don't regard the Engls that I use as simple either! It's that old-school tube saturation. There's nothing interrupting that other than a tuner or sometimes a compressor to play the country stuff. Then the delays are added in through the second amp. So in one sense it's a very primitive guitar-into-amp set up.'

So has Steve Morse settled upon the perfect marriage? 'It's forever evolving, but I've never been happier,' he clarifies. 'The Engl amp's clean sound is so clean that I could plug my electric classical guitar into it and use the same rig and set up and pedals. The distortion sound gives me a clarity that I've never had too. Now all I gotta do is find something interesting to play!' Morse has clearly done just that with Flying Colors, and somewhere there's a storm brewing...

Flying Colors released their debut album on March 26 via Mascot Label Group/Music Theories Recordings

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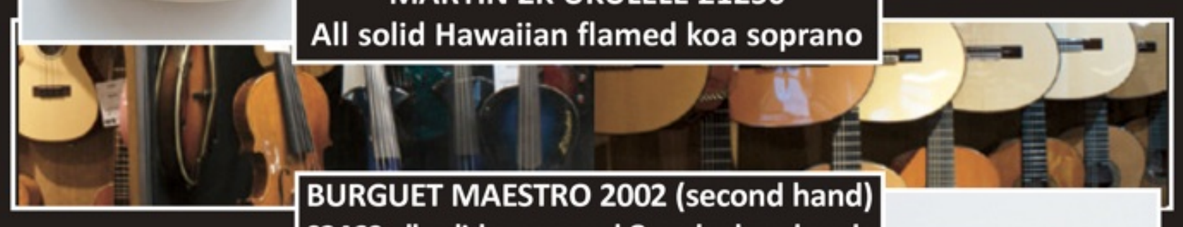

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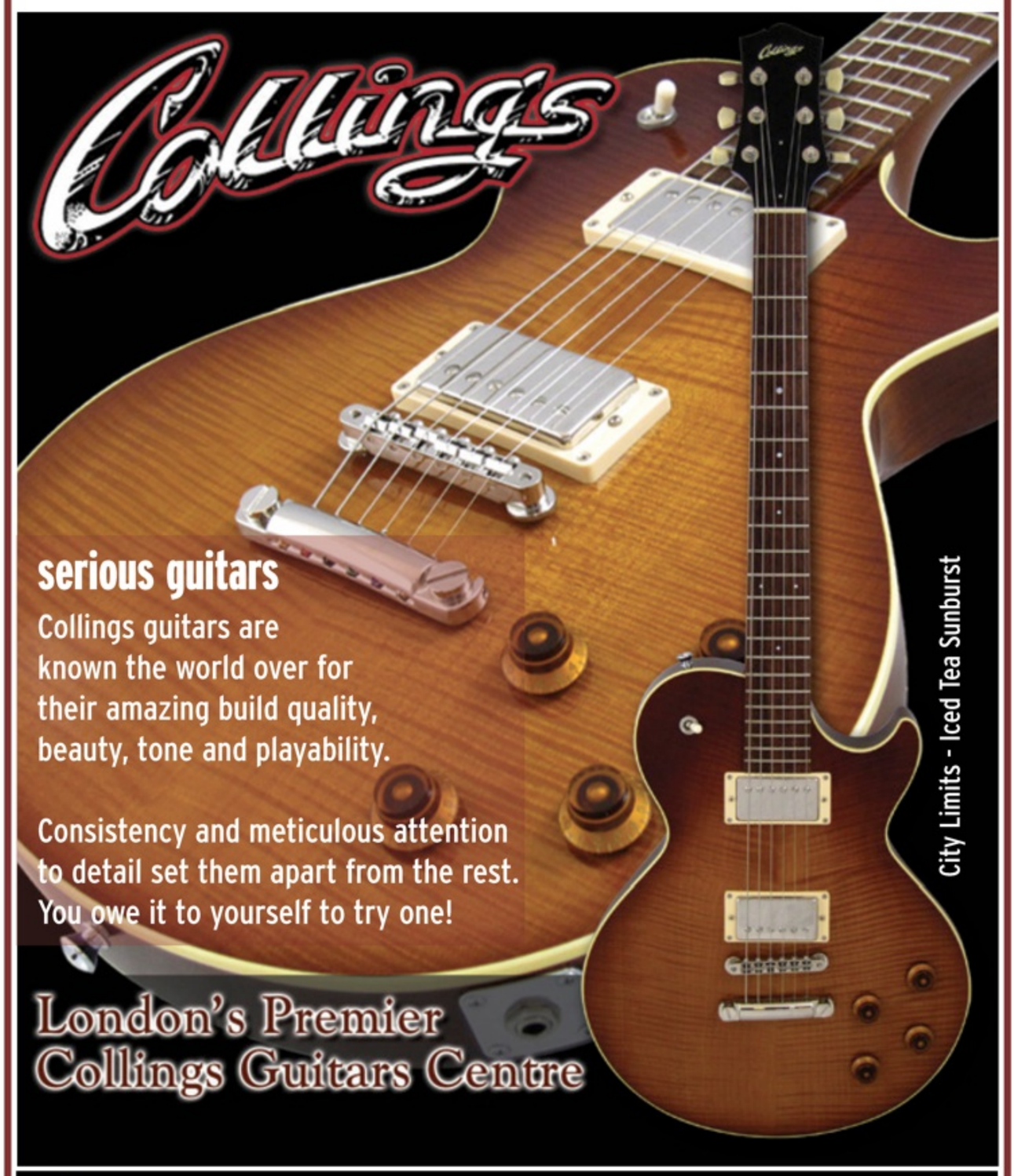

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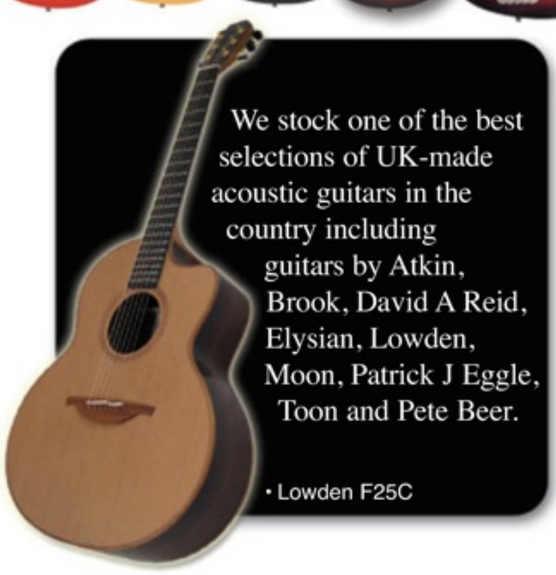

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Photo: Austin Hargrave

Daze *Of Thunder*

Blues-rock powerhouse Walter Trout, once of Canned Heat and the Bluesbreakers, is back with an album that looks back to early country blues for inspiration. Interview by **Michael Heatley**

Call Walter Trout anything you like, but don't call him a one-hit wonder... unless you happen to be in Holland. 'It's one of the best territories for me,' he smiles, 'because I had a massive hit here in 1990, a Number 1 record. It got me a good audience and I've been able to hold on to most of them.'

The song in question is called *The Love That We Once Knew*, and it appeared on his second album, *Prisoner Of A Dream*. Ironically, it was included as a last-minute filler. 'It's a power ballad, something I wrote at 17 and forgot about. We needed another song, and I said "Well, I've got this ballad; it'll take up five minutes of space."' You just never know... these days, not only do the Dutch expect to hear it, but they all join in. 'They sing so loud there's no sense in me even singing it! I could play it at other places, but here it's just special to them.'

> *'I had Blind Willie Johnson blasting every night. I almost drove my family out of the house'*

It is, of course, a new album, *Blues For The Modern Daze*, that brings Walter to Europe this spring. While you might categorise the jovial Mr Trout as a 'blues rocker', he's at pains to explain that this is an album of original material that pays homage to the form – and to one favourite acoustic bluesman in particular – rather than a familiar collection of covers.

'When I decided to do a blues album, instead of listening to a lot of modern blues artists, I decided I'd go back and listen to a lot of country blues,' he explains. 'I was in Canned Heat for five years, and all their hits were based on old country blues riffs, so I thought I'd go back and take another look.

'There's Robert Johnson, who's the god of country blues, but I've heard him so much for so long. I decided to look up different people instead, and really delve in. I listened to Bill Broonzy, Blind Lemon Jefferson and Charley Patton... a lot of those guys. But there was something about Blind Willie Johnson that really got to me. I was incredibly affected by his music. I hadn't really checked him out before, but I almost drove my family out of the house because I had this guy blasting out every night! It really inspired me when it was time to write; I kind of felt him over my shoulder.'

Trout can create stage-friendly blues-rock at will, but it's when he lays back that you appreciate the intensity of his lyrics. *Never Knew You Well* is a pointed message to somebody he won't name but has known all his life. 'We used to be best friends; that was written to be almost therapeutic. I have written a couple of other songs about this fellow, but they never addressed it as directly. That's probably one of the least bluesy songs, though it started off as a country blues lick. My wife thinks it sounds like a Neil Young song, but it just came out the way it did; a little bit pissed off and a little bit hurt.'

Another heavy lyric, *Recovery*, is autobiographical, 'not just for me, but also for a good number of my friends who are recovering addicts. I've been through all of it; I spent the first couple of years of the '70s running around the streets of LA as a heroin addict, and I've been through all aspects of drugs and alcohol. I've been teetotal since July 9 1987, but I've played that song for a couple of my friends and it's reduced them to tears.'

Gear

Guitars
1973 Stratocaster – 'I've played it for 30 years, every day, so it kinda has my spirit in it' – plus 'bitsa' Scott Lentz for stage work

Amps
Mesa Boogie Mark V amp and 4x12" cab

Effects
Mesa Boogie Leslie-style Revolver

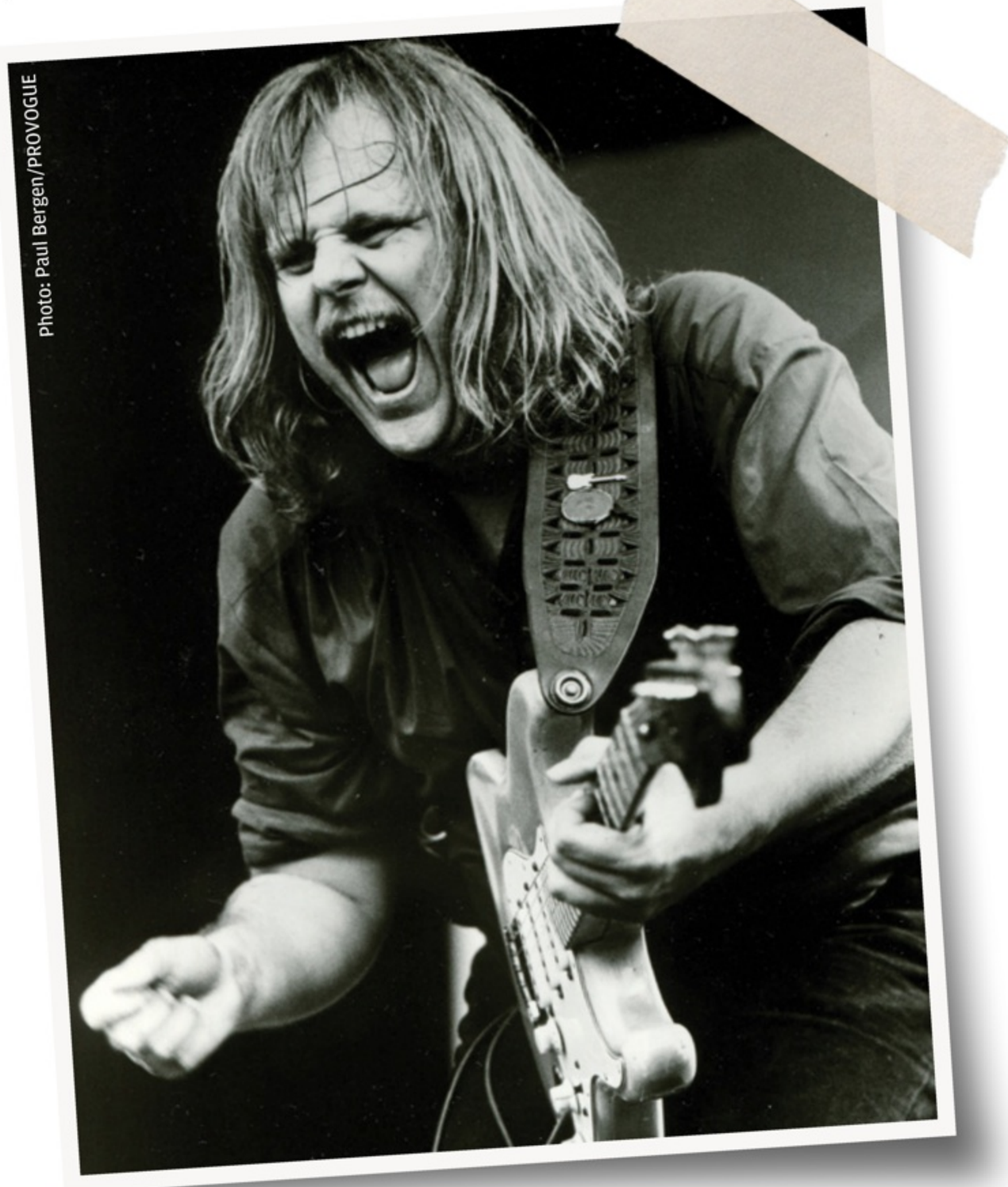

Photo: Paul Bergen/PROVOGUE

Walter with the Strat he's now retired: 'Guarding it was too much stress'

Photo: Paul Bergen/PROVOGUE

Photo: Austin Hargrave

The message of title track *Blues For The Modern Daze* is, he believes, self-explanatory, and reflects Trout's support for the Occupy movement in the States. 'There's a growing, incredible rift of inequality,' he says, his voice hardening. 'The rich are getting very much richer and the poor are getting poorer and, especially in the States, it's quite ridiculous now. Corporate profits are up, the top one per cent of the population is doing better than they've ever done, and the rest of us are struggling to even feed our kids.'

The message is hammered home yet again in another powerful new track, *Money Rules The World*. 'I live in quite an affluent town and they're closing down my kid's elementary school,' Trout states. 'They're closing down post offices, they're closing libraries... but the rich people are fucking raging, man. I just find the whole thing insane...'

With 15 tracks on the album, Walter intends to ring the changes live. 'On this tour, because the record is not out yet, I'm doing five or six new songs. Starting at the end of April, when the record comes out, I'll be doing pretty much the whole thing.' A pre-European gig in Canada gave him the opportunity to play some new songs live, and *Lonely, Saw My Mama Cryin'*, *Brother's Keeper* and the title track were all well received. 'It was our first time playing them in front of people and I felt very comfortable.'

'My old Strat was like one of my kids. I'd end up taking it into the restaurant with me'

Trout has long been a Mesa Boogie convert, and he's been using a Mark V for a year and a half now. And though in the studio he tried a variety of Fenders and Marshalls on offer, he ended up doing pretty much the whole album on the amp he's most familiar with. 'Everything from the really clean fills on *Recovery* down to *Blues For The Modern Daze* is the Mark V on Channel 3,' he says. 'Things like *Blues For My Baby*, which is a very clear lead sound, that's the Mark V on Channel 3 again but with the volume on the guitar on 2.

'We would try these different amps, we would record them, and then I'd say "Now let's try that with the Boogie," and both I and [co-producer] Eric Corne thought it sounded better. I think you're gonna be hard-pressed to find a more versatile amp out there than a Mark V; I'm just in love with it.'

As for guitars, it's still Strats all the way both live and when recording. Trout retired his old Strat, bought off the shelf in 1973 and originally white, from live work about three years ago. 'It was too much stress,' he sighs. 'We'd stop for lunch on a freeway in America and I'd end up taking it into the restaurant with me, and even if we had a night off in a hotel and I wanted to go to the movies, I'd take it with me. Otherwise I ➔

Mike + Jesse EQUALS BLUES

As a man who grew up in the '60s, Trout admits Clapton and Hendrix made their inevitable impression. 'The guy who got me going with all this, though, was Michael Bloomfield,' he says. 'When the Paul Butterfield Blues Band's first album came out in 1965, nobody on the planet was playing guitar the way Bloomfield did on that record.'

Another major influence was Jesse Ed Davis, Taj Mahal's guitarist, whom he met on arriving in California. 'It was an all-star band apart from me... the bass player was Bob Glaub, still one of the top players in the world, and the drummer was Gary Mallaber, who played on *Moondance* with Van Morrison and went on to play with Steve Miller. Jesse Ed, after Taj Mahal, worked with John Lennon on *Walls And Bridges* and played with the Faces on a tour.

'When I met Jesse I said, "I know you're looking for a rhythm player." He asked who I'd played with and I said, "Not really anybody, but give me a shot." I got into the band, and one of the first things I did was started playing him his solos! He'd go, "Where did you get that?" and I'd say "That's your solo from such and such!" and he'd crack up.'

That was in mid-'70s California. Trout then passed through John Lee Hooker's band to Canned Heat, a period which lasted for four years before he teamed up with John Mayall. 'The first tour I did with John was in 1982; I joined him permanently in '85 and stayed with him till '89. I had an awesome time. I would hang out at his house in LA and listen to his collection of stuff. We'd also spend a lot of time riding in buses and vans and he was always saying, "Listen to this guy," so that was great.'

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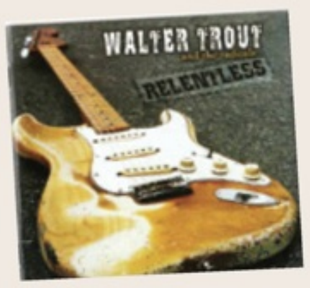
Listen up

WALTER TROUT BAND
Prisoner Of A Dream
1990
Walter's second album had the hit *The Love That We Once Knew*, Dylan's *Girl From The North Country* and much more

WALTER TROUT
Relentless
2003
Recorded live in the Paradiso Club in Amsterdam, it 'captured my band in its rawest, most in-your-face form'



WALTER TROUT
Blues For The Modern Daze
2012
A rarity – a collection of original material that channels the spirit of the blues pioneers but hits home with relevant lyrical content

And another thing...

A Fender Pro Reverb Walter used early in his career was a stinker in more ways than one. 'My cat had a litter of kittens in the back, so the amp proceeded to stink when it got hot. You could always smell my band out in the club!'

couldn't relax – it was like one of my kids. Also, it weighs more than a Les Paul; I don't know why.'

Iconic Strats tend not to be of that unpopular early-'70s vintage. 'People that say they're no good can get their head out of their ass,' Walter cheerfully suggests. 'I've always been a guy that, when there's something that's hyped up and is supposed to be cool, then I go for the other thing.' He took his unfashionable Strat out of storage for the new album and used it on the song *Lonely* to overdub a solo and layer some guitar parts. 'And at the end of recording that song, it died electronically. I had 14 days booked – I didn't have time to get it fixed. So all the guitar parts on there, except for that song, are by my stage Strat.'

'People who say that '70s Stratocasters are no good can get their head out of their ass'

The stage guitar was made by San Diego luthier Scott Lentz, who built the body when he heard Walter was having shoulder problems. Seymour Duncan contributed a set of pickups, while a friendly repairman offered a neck he had in his shop. 'We put all that together and that's what I've been using on stage; I have a hard time telling the different between that and my old Strat. And it also weighs almost nothing, which saves my shoulder.'

It was the weight of his trademark Strat that, a few years ago, destroyed Walter's left shoulder – a frightening prospect for anyone, let alone a professional musician. ' I lost the use of my left arm. I had to start over again and re-train the muscles. It took me months to even be able to play a barre chord. I had to get therapy on my arm, and I remember telling my wife: "I'm gonna have to get a job in Starbucks or something because I can't play the guitar anymore."' Only time and patience could solve the problem. 'I had to start over. I remember sitting around the living room for hours, and the first day I was actually able to play a barre chord, my wife and I just danced around – it was such a symbolic thing. "Wow, it's been a month and I can actually make my fingers go from chord to chord!"'

Fortunately a career that began in California in the early '70s continues today, with 180-200 shows a year not unusual. Walter rarely affords himself the luxury of stopping to think where he's going next. 'Each new record is like a child, something that I sat down and created out of the ether. One day it wasn't there and then I sat down and wrote the whole thing in about two weeks, and recorded it in two more. I'm not thinking about my next record. I'm anxious to get this one in people's hands, let them listen to it and hopefully enjoy it.'

With nearly a quarter of a century having elapsed since his last hit, maybe it's time for Walter to write another. Don't hold your breath – but do try to catch *Blues For The Modern Daze*.

Effects MR MINIMAL

Walter Trout has never used effects, preferring to let his fingers do all the talking. 'Though I don't really use effects, I do have the amp set with a lot of overdrive,' he says. But there's one exception to the rule: 'I have a Mesa Boogie Leslie revolving speaker, and I use that once in a while if the guitar seems like it's going a bit out of tune and I'm about to play some chords; it kind of mellows out the tuning. It's a natural chorus effect. Mesa Boogie made 100 of them, and then they stopped. I have two, Carlos Santana has two, the guy from Everclear has one... and where the other 95 are, I've no idea!'

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Photo: Mike Prior

Lost And Found

Guitarists' solo projects often have a gaping hole where a 'proper' singer should be, but Rich Robinson's latest is melodic, heartfelt, subtle – and nothing like a Black Crowes album. Interview by **Michael Heatley**

Gear

Guitars
Gretsch, Gibson, Fender (electric), Martin and Dove (acoustic) guitars

Amps
Vox AC30 and Reason amps

Effects
Fulltone Echoplexes and a Fender reverb unit, plus whammy and fuzz pedals

Writers who judge artists by their biographies are treading on thin ice, especially where Rich Robinson – once of the Black Crowes, now a solo artist – is concerned. According to his PR, new album *Through A Crooked Sun* is the product of 'an unexpected band hiatus, financial difficulties and a painful divorce'. But suggest that the man has made music from misery and you'll get short shrift. Positivity, it seems, is Rich's new middle name.

'People go through things in life and either grow and learn from them, or you can sit around. This record is more about the positives of everything rather than the negatives, and it's the negatives that are concentrated on in the bio.

'I went through all that shit,' he continues, 'and it's fine. I have love in my life and I have new babies and things are moving forward. I look at it more as an incredibly positive record. You go through things and then you come out of them, and the songs have that theme – you go through this and everything's okay, it's not a permanent condition. Things change, and there are incredible learning possibilities when you go through a tragedy.'

It's a well-known fact that the Crowes, US rock's hottest new property in the '90s, had a history peppered with acrimonious exchanges between Rich and elder brother/singer Chris. A reunion in 2006 after a five-year hiatus ended suddenly four years later after a 20th anniversary tour. So maybe it's no surprise, though a shame for his fans, that he preferred to pad out his recent tour set with covers rather than past hits. 'I don't play any Black Crowes songs. This isn't the Black Crowes; it's me doing my own stuff.'

The Black Crowes revealed their musical roots in their second incarnation, incorporating country, gospel and bluegrass elements into their music in a more overt way than before, and that trend is very much continued in Rich's output. There's an acoustic element he's particularly fond of. 'I think unplugged shows can be really cool, absolutely,' he concurs. 'I use acoustic on stage; the last Crowes tour was a half-acoustic, half-electric three-hour set.'

All of *Through A Crooked Sun*'s songs got an airing on tour. 'The European version has 16 songs,' Rich explains, 'while the US version has 12 – an EP has been tacked on to the end. So we play all of them plus a bunch of cover tunes. Everything's been received really well. They're all really fun to play.'

'I don't play any Black Crowes songs. This is me doing my own stuff'

The album is very varied, with every other track offering a change of pace. This, Rich explains, is quite deliberate. 'I look at records as a whole, not just a collection of songs. Every different sequence you can do will create a different feeling. I sit down and think about creating a journey. When we had vinyl you'd sit down and listen to side one and side two... I think vinyl is always better.'

Sound-wise, he's aiming somewhere between Steve Miller (*It's Not Easy*) and John Fogerty, with a touch ➔

Robinson's favourites include a '50s Fender Esquire and an aged Gibson Custom Shop SG

RICH ROBINSON

Listen up

BLACK CROWES
The Southern Harmony And Musical Companion
(1992)
The chart-topper that put the Crowes firmly on the map in 1992, thanks to hit singles *Remedy*, *Sting Me*, *Thorn In My Pride* and *Hotel Illness*

RICH ROBINSON
Paper
(2004)
Another family affair, though recorded in the Crowes' career gap: Rich handled guitar, bass and other instruments as well as taking over the lead vocals, with son Taylor adding percussion

RICH ROBINSON
Through A Crooked Sun
(2011)
An accomplished 16-track selection that shows Rich more than content with his post-Crowes lot. Highlights: *Gone Away* and *Hey Fear*

And another thing...

When playing in the earliest Black Crowes line-up in 1984, Rich, then just 14, had to be snuck in and out of venues. He was sometimes refused entry when he later returned to attend someone else's gig!

Guitar Hero? NO THANKS

Rich didn't see himself as the guitar hero Crowes press coverage painted him as – 'I never thought about it, I just kinda did what I did' – but was happy to spend his first royalty cheque on a guitar that's still his all-time favourite. 'The Gibson 335 is a '63 and I've had it since *Southern Harmony*. It's something I really wanted, and at the end of our tour in '91 I was in a position to get some cool guitars. I was writing more and more songs in different tunings and I needed backup. I bought a couple of really cool guitars from a guy in Minneapolis, and this was one. I feel it's my favourite.'

The 335 didn't make the trip to Europe, where Rich returned to his roots by touring in a van – and was a little miffed to find that wi-fi coverage is far from ideal in the back of a Transit! Two Gretsches and a brace of Fenders, however, did. 'I brought guitars over here I'm comfortable playing, like my '61 White Falcon and a mid-'60s Country Gentleman. I have an SG that was made for me by the Gibson Custom Shop – that's one of my favourite guitars – and there's a Strat. And I also have my blond Tele here... that's kinda where I am. I've been getting by with those and it's been really, really cool.'

When touring in the States Rich brings out his 335 along with another treasured Gibson, a Les Paul goldtop. Add two acoustic Martins – a 1953 D-28 and newer D-18 – and it's clear a collection totalling about 50 or 60 is a substantial reward for the years of fame and feuding. He's also been pictured with Trussart and Zemaitis guitars in recent years, though these do not currently feature as stage instruments. Amp-wise he's proud of his handwired 40th Anniversary model Vox AC30, but has recently found something to rival this. 'I have this company out of St Louis called Reason amps. I really love 'em.'

of George Harrison on the raga-informed *Lost And Found*. It takes until track 11, *Station Man*, for a direct Crowes comparison to rear its head, and by then you've had the Beatlesque *I Don't Hear The Sound Of You*, whose coda features – good gracious – a vibes solo.

Rich formed a short-lived band called Hookah Brown in the gap between Crowes incarnations before releasing his first solo album, *Paper*, in 2004. Comparisons between that project and this current effort are, he believes, more or less irrelevant.

'It was almost a lifetime ago! I look on *Paper* as that long ago. I mean, the band split up once, then we really split up, and weren't going to get back together... that's what we really understood back in 2001.

'So I tried to put together a band, tried to do this, tried to do that, and it didn't work out. I had all these songs I'd written for singers and I thought fuck it, I'm not going to not make a record because of that – so I decided to try it myself.

'I learned a lot on the first album, but this is the start of where I need to go now'

'It was the first time I'd really sung by myself, it was the first time I'd written a full song with lyrics, it was definitely different. I feel I learned a tremendous amount from that first record and I feel I really grew tremendously in that place. That's what it was about. I don't really compare the two – I feel this is the start of where I am and where I need to go now.'

His current way of working revolves around 'Understanding my voice, what reads better for me, how I'm going to sing, lyrical content, how to convey what I wanna say... and then writing music to fit that.' His vocals are admittedly more Keith Richard than Mick Jagger, but have improved immeasurably from the four earlier EP tracks where his voice is swathed with effects.

Instrumentally speaking, Rich is the only guitar player on the record except on *Bye Bye Baby*, on which Warren Hayes plays. It's a favour repaid, as Rich explains. 'He's a friend; Gov't Mule's first opening slot was opening for us in Dallas early on, around '94-'95.'

A month of US touring for Rich and his band in March will be followed by a well-earned six weeks off. 'Then we'll see... hopefully come back maybe do some more touring in Europe and the UK, some festivals if possible, and go back to the States in the fall.'

Touring this album before European release (it came out in the States last October) may seem contrary, but Rich Robinson seems to have his head screwed on. Just don't mention the Crowes...

The Black Crowes: currently on an 'extended hiatus'

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One Company

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Photo: Brigitte Engl/Getty

Instant Charmer

The ex-Rascals and ex-Last Shadow Puppets guitar wielding frontman Miles Kane has gone solo and is free to explore his love of '60s garage, soul, surf, and sleazy psychedelic rock'n'roll. Interview by **David Greeves**

With his mop-top hairstyle and razor-sharp mod suits, Miles Kane looks like a blast from the past. As a guitar player, his retro influences are no less proudly displayed, mixing echo-laden surf sounds with fuzzed-up riffage and an economical, aggressive approach to solos. But as he prepares to embark on a major UK tour, Miles Kane is very much a man for the present – and one to watch for the future, too.

Having cut his teeth with cult Liverpool bands the Little Flames and the Rascals, Kane shot to prominence as co-frontman of the Last Shadow Puppets alongside his friend and frequent collaborator, Arctic Monkeys' Alex Turner. Embarking on a solo career, Kane's debut album *Colour Of The Trap* was released to much acclaim last year, peaking at a creditable number 11 on the UK albums chart. He's currently working on his next record, hopefully due out before the end of the year.

Put like that, it sounds like a story of steady progression – but Kane makes it clear that it's taken a lot of hard work, commitment and a good deal of patience to get him where he is today.

'Making the first record took longer than I thought it would,' he confesses. 'I remember halfway through thinking "I just want to put this to bed now, I just want to get out there." I hadn't gigged for a year and a half! I just wanted to be out there doing it and living it. But it took a bit more time. I went away and wrote some more songs, then went back into the studio... and I wouldn't change it for the world now.

'It was about making sure that everything on the record was done 100 percent to the best of my ability at that moment. I couldn't have sang or played the guitar any better. If you know that, you can – well, not relax, exactly, but you feel like whatever happens next, you know you've given it your all. But, thank God, people dig it and it's been a great year.'

It's been a pretty great career so far, in fact, and with so much already behind him it's easy to forget that Kane is still only 25. But for a young man who's toured the world a couple of times, played the biggest festival stages and starred in music videos alongside a supermodel or two, Miles Kane seems exceptionally down to earth.

'I can't be bothered with a song over three minutes long. I just want it to be all impact'

'I'm buzzing for the tour in April, because it's like that next step on the ladder in terms of the size of the venues,' he says. 'It's getting bigger – that's what really excites me. We're growing and the audience is growing with us. These are the biggest shows I'll have done on my own. It just feels so exciting, and we're definitely going to put on a bit of a show. It's just another little step on the ladder... and then who knows where we'll go after that?'

Many of Kane's musical influences are drawn directly from the '50s and '60s. He cites the likes of Link Wray and Duane Eddy as his guitar idols, while *Colour* ➔

Gear

Guitars
Gibson ES-335
Martin GT-70
Gibson J-45

Amps
Vox AC30 Handwired
Fender Twin Reverb

Pedals
Z.Vex Fuzz Factory
Z.Vex Box Of Rock
Danelectro Reel Echo
Boss DD-20 Giga Delay
Electro-Harmonix Memory Man
Electro-Harmonix Holy Stain
Boss RE-20 Space Echo
Red Witch Moon Phaser
Boss Fender '65 Deluxe Reverb

Kane in the studio with his beloved Martin GT-70 electric

Listen up

MILES KANE
Colour of the Trap
(2011)
Kane's solo debut of last year laid out his blueprint for hooky, retro-inspired pop. Check out the killer guitar riffs on songs like *Inhaler* and *Come Closer*

LAST SHADOW PUPPETS
The Age Of The Understatement
(2008)
This chart-topping. Mercury-nominated album saw Miles Kane teaming up with head Arctic Monkey Alex Turner for some indie rock with a cool Scott Walker-meets-the-Beatles twist

THE RASCALS
Rascalize
(2008)
Signs of things to come abound on the Rascals' debut release. Even in a straight indie context, Kane can't resist piling on the delay for some great surf-style guitar sounds

Of The Trap mixes elements of Motown, mod, soul and psychedelia with pop and indie rock to create a heady brew. Far from coming across like a retro rehash, it's great to hear somebody with a genuine passion for the music taking these sounds to a brand new generation.

'What I'm doing, it *is* pop music,' says Kane. 'I want to be on the radio and I want to be in the charts, but you've still got those weird sounds going on in there. You've still got those influences, but you're making it now and you're making it pop. So hopefully kids can hear that and go, "Wow, that guitar, what's that...?"'

It might be pop, but it's pop with a raw edge. Subscribing to the 'all killer, no filler' school of songwriting, Kane writes songs that are direct, accessible and sincere, with little time for messing about.

'I still feel like I can't really be bothered with a song over three minutes!' he insists. 'I don't want any fat on the song. I just want it to be all impact and not a weak bit in there. That applies to the new stuff too. We've just finished recording a new single – that's going to be out in April – but from now until the tour I'm just writing. We'll hopefully start the next record soon, so I'm trying to get all the songs solid. I want it to be really exciting and upbeat, and probably a lot heavier than the first one. I want 10 tracks that you just want to dance to!'

> *'The buzz you get from singing and playing guitar, it's the best drug in the world'*

As you might expect, Kane's not given to extended guitar solos. Instead, he favours the odd short blast of fuzz guitar and a catchy lick here and there.

'I always think it's quite cool when you're singing and then you just pull away and give it a quick burst,' he says. 'Paul Weller does it really well, just adding those little solos. It's a bit kind of scatty, but I love that! What I try and do is those sort of lead lines that really jump out at you – and I can't noodle anyway.

'The first time I heard Link Wray, that was the start for me. All those leads are just on one string, and that's what I do, really, just going up and down. It might be fast, but it's all on one string!'

We were keen to discover how a teenager of the late '90s and noughties first got into players like Wray – a true pioneer and legend of the guitar, but hardly a household name. 'I can't really remember,' he says. 'Obviously I was into Oasis and all that stuff, but when I was growing up I just loved any kind of surf music, even if it was cheesy. I love the *Batman* theme – I've always loved that! Then I found out Link Wray had done a version of it, so I bought this album that had that on it, but it also had *Rumble* on it and all these great tunes. It's just that sound with the reverb and the trem. So then it was, I wanna do that, play like that, but also beef it up a bit and give it a bit more heart. That's where it started really. I got a Memory Man and a fuzz pedal and it's just grown from there.'

Another key to Kane's success, and something that sets him apart from so many guitar bands currently in the spotlight, is his stage presence. He's a compelling live performer with an infectious energy. According to Kane, that's just the way he is.

'It just feels natural to me,' he says. 'I can't just stand still and play my guitar and sing. Even when we're rehearsing, it's the same as it is at a gig. The buzz you get from playing the guitar and singing, it's the best drug in the world. I can't describe it. It just takes you somewhere else, and I love it so much.'

Miles Kane's UK tour begins on April 20th. For more information visit www.mileskane.com

Kane's EYE-CANDY

Although Miles Kane is not a big guitar collector, he is the proud owner of a Martin GT-70. This single-cutaway hollowbody, equipped with a pair of DeArmond single-coils and a Bigsby-style vibrato, was one of several unsuccessful attempts by Martin to enter the electric market during the 1960s. Only in production between 1966 and 1968, it might have been a commercial flop back then, but it's right up Kane's street.

'It sounds amazing – it's really good for that surf riff thing,' he says. 'I don't really use that guitar live, though, just because it's quite delicate. I've had it looked at by various people, but it still always goes out of tune. It's more for the studio, really. You can't really bash it around, but it's a beautiful guitar.'

His main instrument is a very late '60s walnut-finish Gibson ES-335, and Kane feels there's definitely something about old guitars he prefers.

'It's quite hard to find a good ES-335 with a Bigsby, but that's very important to my sound. Just about every riff I do has a big wobble in it! I've been using it for about five years now. I've played different guitars, but I don't want anything else, really. It feels so good. The neck on it is quite thin and it's just beautiful to play. I find that a new guitar doesn't fit right, for some reason. With a vintage guitar, because it's old and worn-in, it feels like your favourite jacket when you put it on. You can move up and down the neck easier. It feels more part of you.'

For more information please visit: www.rosetti.co.uk/jtr

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GRETSCH
Bigsby

GRETSCH
Electromatic CVT-III & Double Jet With Bigsby

The affordable Gretsch line expands with a basic but enjoyably quirky three-pickup solidbody and a vibrato-equipped semi-solid goldtop. Review by **Huw Price**

Gretsch semi-acoustics have always hogged the best of the limelight, but the smaller solids and semi-solids have a glorious history too – and they can sound just as cool for a whole range of styles... and not just rockabilly, country and rootsy twang. This month we're looking at a three-pickup guitar based on the '60s Corvette, and another based on the double-cut Duo Jet.

Electromatic CVT-111

One of Gretsch's 'true' solidbodies, the double-cutaway, chamfered-edge Corvette shape still looks remarkably contemporary for a 50-year old design. The CVT-111's all-mahogany construction is period-correct for a '60s Corvette, but a bolt-on maple neck supplants the set neck joint and three Gretsch mini humbuckers sitting in deep, staggered routs replace the wimpy HiLo'Trons. They're controlled by a three-way selector and master volume and tone. The adjustable bridge and tailpiece look familiar, and Kluson style tuners sit on a small, back-angled, scarfe-jointed headstock. Despite Fender's ownership, the medium C profile, the 24.75" scale, the 12" radius slab rosewood fingerboard and the medium jumbo frets mean the CVT has a feel all of its own.

No chance of upgrading these oddball pickups, but luckily they're pretty good

The beefy neck has a 24.75" scale; the machineheads are vintage Kluson-types

Raising the CVT-111's pickups unleashed the beast within, allowing the bridge pickup to chime, growl and bite

Sound

The CVT's wild and exciting character likely won't show itself in the shop. Unplugged, there's bags of sustain and woody resonance; plugged in, it's all a bit tame and bland. Although not true Filtertrons these pickups are voiced similarly, and Filtertrons need to be set close to the strings to avoid sounding muted and ordinary. The CVT's ➔

FINAL SCORE

ELECTROMATIC CVT-111	
Build Quality	**16**/20
Playability	**16**/20
Sound	**16**/20
Value for money	**16**/20
Vibe	**16**/20
TOTAL	**80%**

FACTFILE
Electromatic CVT-III

DESCRIPTION **Solidbody guitar. Made in China**
PRICE **£274.80**

BUILD **Mahogany body with bolt-on 22-fret maple neck, 12" radius rosewood fingerboard, vintage-style tuners, adjustable bridge**

ELECTRICS **Three Gretsch mini humbuckers with master volume and tone controls and three-way pickup selector switch**
LEFT-HANDERS **No**
FINISH **Black, cherry red**

SCALE LENGTH
628mm/24.75"
NECK WIDTH
Nut 42mm
12th fret 52mm
DEPTH OF NECK
First fret 19mm
Ninth fret 21mm
STRING SPACING
Nut 35mm
Bridge 52mm
ACTION AS SUPPLIED
12th fret treble 2.0mm
12th fret bass 2.5mm
WEIGHT **3.25kg/7.15lbs**

CONTACT **Fender GB&I**
01342 331700
www.fender.com

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Punky mid-'60s style from this slim mahogany solidbody with two mini humbuckers. Bargain!
RRP **£228**

Danelectro
Longhorn BB
The lyre-shaped weirdo with three bright-yet-woody lipstick single coils. Max twang for the buck
RRP **£199**

FACTFILE

G5445T Double Jet with Bigsby

DESCRIPTION **Semi-solid body guitar. Made in China**
PRICE **£514.80**

BUILD **Basswood body with maple ply cap, 22-fret set mahogany neck with 10" radius rosewood fingerboard, vintage-style tuners, adjustable bridge and Bigsby licensed trem**

ELECTRICS **Two blacktop Filtertron pickups with master volume and tone, individual volume controls and three-way pickup selector switch**
LEFT-HANDERS **No**
FINISH **Metallic gold, black**

SCALE LENGTH
628mm/24.75"
NECK WIDTH
Nut 42mm
12th fret 53mm
DEPTH OF NECK
First fret 20mm
Ninth fret 24mm
STRING SPACING
Nut 34.5mm
Bridge 52mm
ACTION AS SUPPLIED
12th fret treble 2.0mm
12th fret bass 2.5mm
WEIGHT **3.75kg/8.25lbs**

CONTACT **Fender GB&I**
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Groovy '60s Gentleman-alike with laminated maple body, set maple neck, two EW-Retro humbuckers. Tragically, no Bigsby
RRP **£425**

Höfner
HCT-CG-GT
Goldtop-take on the beat boom-friendly Club electric. Semi-solid with sustain block, two skinny Höfner pickups, nickel hardware
RRP **£360**

Bizarrely oversized pickup surrounds take the edge off the vintage look

The Bigsby makes the controls hard to reach. Luckily there's a master volume too

The Double Jet scythes through the canon of classic Gretsch tones but with sustain closer to that of a Les Paul or SG

pickups were set too far away, and because they're screwed tight to the body they can't be raised. Actually, they can – but you'll need to put something spongy underneath to support them.

That's what we did, and it instantly transformed the guitar. Lifting them a few millimetres unleashed the beast, allowing the bridge to chime, growl and bite. The neck has a fluty woodiness and the range of clean and dirty tones on offer has a real Gretsch-like quality, plus SG-style aggression and sustain.

The classic in-between setting is missing because of the middle pickup (maybe Gretsch is responding to the small-bodied, three-pickup guitars that Jack White plays – but his guitars have on/off switches for each pickup). The bridge sounds all but identical to the middle pickup if you roll off some top, so that extra pickup limits versatility.

G5445T Double Jet

Although a semi-solid, this Double Jet weighs more than the CVT. Inside, a block of basswood has been routed out to create open areas around a central block that extends just beyond the bridge, then a three-ply maple arched top has been glued on top. The neck joint is non-vintage; old Duo Jets and Jet Firebirds were built like jazz guitars with a neck extension (or 'tongue') that lifted the fingerboard above the surface of the body. This neck joint is more reminiscent of a Les Paul or SG, so the fingerboard is glued to the top and both Filtertrons sit relatively low in the body.

Aside from the oddly oversized metal pickup surrounds the styling is pure Gretsch: G-brand 'arrow' knobs, metal switch tip, screw-in strap locks. The Adjusto-Matic bridge and top-mounted Bigsby might not be entirely vintage-correct, but hey, it's a Bigsby! The humpback markers and Kluson-style tuners are nice touches, but the standout feature has to be the metallic gold top. It looks great.

Gretsch controls are quirky. The three-way switch and master tone are easy, but there are three volumes – one for each pickup, plus a master volume on the cutaway horn.

Sound

Acoustically the Double Jet sounds a bit muted, but plugging it in reveals a completely different story. These pickups sound fantastic – and the height adjustment is right from the get-go. The semi-solid qualities shine through for fingerstyle adventures and clean jazz chord voicings. Cranking up the gain this guitar scythes through the canon of classic Gretsch tones from psychobilly to garage punk, through early '70s Townshend to Billy Gibbons and beyond.

The really remarkable thing is that the sustain and dynamic response feels closer to that of a Les Paul or ES-335, and the modified neck joint makes the playing feel similar as well. The Bigsby needs a firm hand to induce wobble, but it's a great feature on a guitar that feeds back so sweetly and controllably.

Verdict

The issue with guitars like the CVT is that you have to like the pickups, because drop-in replacements aren't widely available... but once configured properly, it's doubtful you'd feel the need to change them anyway. The Double Jet represents a serious step up in build and sound quality. You get great Gretsch looks and tone without the usual quirks and eccentricities, and it plays superbly. Excellent guitar!

FINAL SCORE

G5445T DOUBLE JET WITH BIGSBY	
Build Quality	**16**/20
Playability	**18**/20
Sound	**17**/20
Value for money	**17**/20
Vibe	**19**/20
TOTAL	**87%**

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FENDER

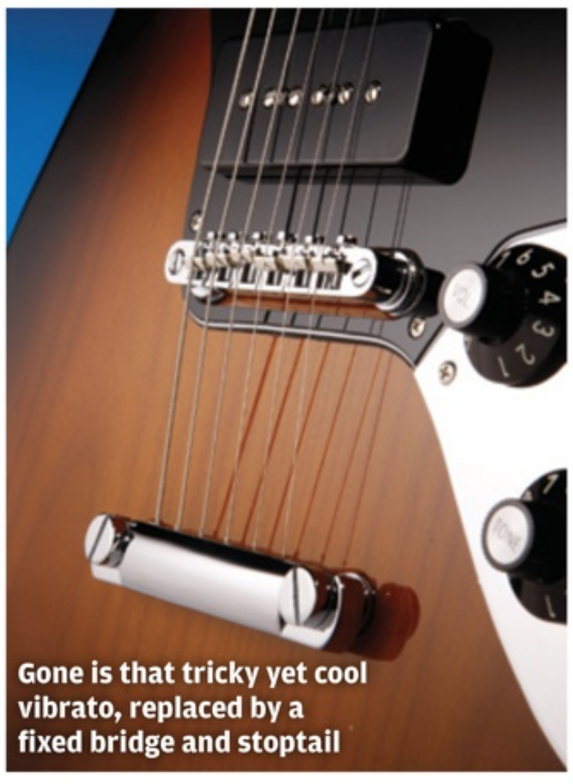
Blacktop Jaguar 90 & Blacktop FSR Jaguar HH

Say bye-bye to the '60s tremolo system, the tone presets and the string mute: Fender's quirky masterpiece relaxes into mature simplicity. But is there still enough Jaguar in the new Jaguar? Review by **Marcus Leadley**

People either love or hate the traditional Jaguar's idiosyncratic hardware and weird resonances. The current Blacktop series only retains the best – and arguably most conservative – aspects of the breed: the short scale, the offset alder body and the master tone and volume controls. The lockable floating trem is replaced with a Adjusto-matic and stoptail arrangement, and a standard three-way selector takes over from the banks of switches. This month we're reviewing the P90 version and the humbucker model – in this case a Fender Special Run edition with a bound fingerboard and a 'blizzard pearl' finish.

Blacktop Jaguar 90

With its big chrome control plate, square-bodied tuners and enlarged headstock with truss rod access slot, this looks like a missing link in Leo's design catalogue between the Jaguar and the post-Fender Music Man Stingray – also a 22-fret instrument with a fixed bridge. The neck's gloss finish and ample C cut adds to the mid-'70s feel. This guitar feels purposeful and resonant, much in the same way as a hardtail Strat. Upper fretboard access is excellent considering the limitations of a chunky bolt-on neck design.

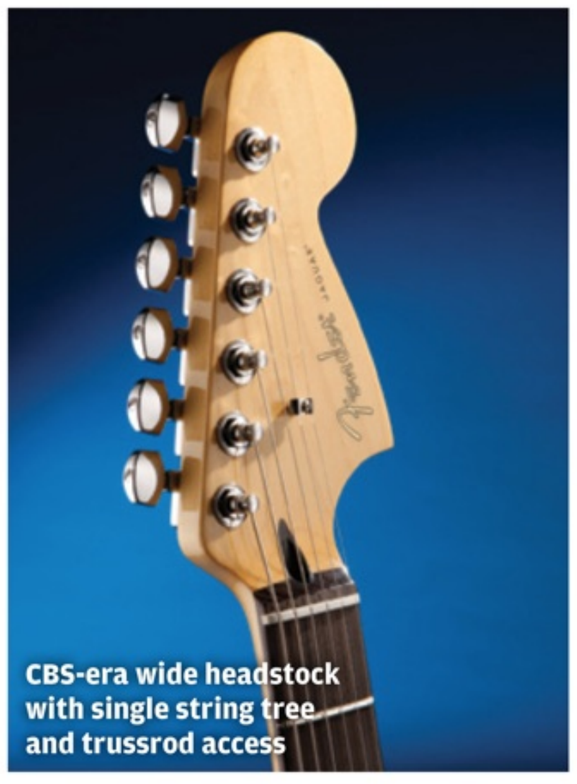


Gone is that tricky yet cool vibrato, replaced by a fixed bridge and stoptail

The shorter 24" scale (the Fender standard is 25.5") leads to a lower string tension more akin to the 'dig in and wail away' character that players ascribe to Gibson style instruments – and it'll suit those with smaller hands too.

Sounds

Single-coil P90 pickups were a stock Gibson option from the late 1940s onwards, and even when the PAF humbucker appeared in 1957 they stayed on in the lower ranges. These days they're considered by no means second-rate, and their gritty, focussed, powerful sound has come right back into fashion for rock and blues, though hum can be a problem. This pickup design has a wider, flatter coil than a Strat pickup so the 90 actually propels this Jag's tone back towards that ➔



CBS-era wide headstock with single string tree and trussrod access

FINAL SCORE

FENDER BLACKTOP JAGUAR 90	
Build Quality	**17**/20
Playability	**18**/20
Sound	**17**/20
Value for money	**18**/20
Vibe	**17**/20
TOTAL	**87%**

FACTFILE

Blackguard Jaguar 90

DESCRIPTION **Solidbody electric. Made in Mexico**
PRICE **£646.80**

BUILD **Alder body with bolt-on maple neck, 22 fret rosewood fingerboard. Chrome hardware, Adjusto-matic bridge with anchored tailpiece**

ELECTRICS **Twin Blacktop Jaguar 90 single coil pickups, master volume and tone controls with '60s style skirted amp knobs and three-way pickup selector**
LEFT-HANDERS **No**
FINISH **Two colour sunburst, candy apple red**

SCALE LENGTH
610mm/24"
NECK WIDTH
Nut 42.2mm
12th fret 51.2mm
DEPTH OF NECK
First fret 22mm
Ninth fret 23.2mm
STRING SPACING
Nut 35mm
Bridge 52mm
ACTION AS SUPPLIED
12th fret treble 2.0mm
12th fret bass 2.2mm
WEIGHT **3.63kg/8lbs**

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Blue Label Esprit 3
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Epiphone
50th Ann '61 SG Special
P90 pickups, stoptail and tune-o-matic bridge, 24.75" scale and 22 frets
RRP **£299**

FACTFILE

FSR Blacktop Jaguar HH

DESCRIPTION **Solidbody electric. Made in Mexico**
PRICE **£658.80**

BUILD **Alder body with bolt-on maple neck, 22-fret bound rosewood fingerboard. Chrome hardware, Adjusto-Matic bridge with anchored tailpiece, three-ply black/white pickguard**

ELECTRICS **Two Hot Vintage Alnico humbuckers with nickel covers, master volume and tone controls with Jazz Bass style knobs, three-way selector**
LEFT-HANDERS **No**
FINISH **FSR blizzard pearl; standard Jaguar HH comes in black or silver**

SCALE LENGTH
610mm/24"
NECK WIDTH
Nut 42.3mm
12th fret 53mm
DEPTH OF NECK
First fret 22.5mm
Ninth fret 23.5mm
STRING SPACING
Nut 34.2mm
Bridge 51.0mm
ACTION AS SUPPLIED
12th fret treble 1.8mm
12th fret bass 2.2mm
WEIGHT **3.63kg/8lbs**

CONTACT **Fender GBI**
01342 331 700
www.fender.com

Like this? Try this...

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An SG meets a Fender Strat in a dark alley, with a 24.75" scale, humbuckers and a bolt-on neck. Nice
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Graduate Slimline
Like Morgan cars, GS guitars exist in a handmade fashion backwater – but try one, and you'll understand
RRP **£824**

Gibson
SG standard
A trusty warhorse with a pair of humbuckers and an appropriate scale length to give a similar feel
MRSP **£1294**

This Special Run version comes with blizzard white paint and Jazz Bass knobs

Square-bodied sealed machineheads take care of tuning duties

Distortion is where the Jaguar HH really excels. With its hot pickups, chords have a chunky authority

of a Jazzmaster, without being quite so mellow. Direct into a clean amp the Jaguar 90 is brisk and bright. The bridge pickup is slightly nasal, both pickups together are rich and resonant – a great sound for clean chords – while the darker neck pickup still holds on to a fair degree of top-end clarity. All together, there's a plenty of twang for country, blues and pop.

Adding a little drive at the amp takes you into a classic and well-articulated electric blues tone, with the slightly ragged, aggressive P90s giving the Jaguar a brogue not unlike a Les Paul Junior. Moving to full overdrive the Jaguar 90 kicks out big, brutal Gretsch-like powerchords off the neck pickup, country rock with both pickups selected, and wailing '60s-'70 leads from the bridge. With an authentic character, the sound palette is refreshingly different to that of the normal Jaguar.

Blacktop FSR Jaguar HH

Our FSR HH comes in blizzard pearl – a kind of metallic silver, quite subtle under lights, where it takes on a range of hues. The cream neck binding adds a touch of class to a neck that feels more chunky and substantial than the Jaguar 90's. The FSR also has Jazz Bass-style knobs, not the amp-style knobs of the standard Blacktop model. In all other respects the Jaguar 90 and the FSR HH are identical apart from the pickups: this one has Hot Vintage Alnicos.

Sounds

These are well-voiced pickups. A clean tone on the bridge has a refreshing absence of mud or boxiness in the midrange. Chords sound passable, but we'd choose the twin pickup sound for clean rhythm work as it's better articulated with a fuller frequency range and a bit more acoustic character. The neck pickup is a tad dark for chord duty in any territory other than fairy traditional jazz. Clean picking sounds sweet and hi-fi on all three selector settings, and there's a good degree of difference to work with.

These pickups are pretty hot and it doesn't take much gain to move into distortion, which is where the FSR HH excels. Chords have a chunky authority and lead lines feel as if you are tearing them, still connected, from the fretboard. It's about as close as you can get to having a Gibson experience with a Fender. I had expected it to feel and sound like a Tele Deluxe, but not so. It's a load of fun!

One criticism: the tone circuits on both the 90 and the HH leave a lot to be desired. There's very little effect until you get to about three-quarters off, and then all the top end just dies. This could be sorted with a cheap and easy mod, but on medium-priced guitars the issue should have been addressed.

Verdict

These are excellent all-rounders – good player's guitars with a quality feel and a wide range of tones. The Jaguar 90 is the more 'Fenderish' sounding of the two, but even then the pickups create a different flavour. The Jaguar HH feels and sounds like it belongs in the same sonic stable as a Les Paul or a PRS SE, which is an interesting proposition. Neither one replaces the traditional Jaguar, but they add flexibility and bring that cool styling to a wider audience. If Leo had added these two models to the range back in the '60s, we might have a very different sense of what a Jaguar is today. Apart from anything else, the combination of scale length and bolt-on neck makes these guitars unique – and worth trying for that alone.

FINAL SCORE

FENDER BLACKTOP FSR JAGUAR HH	
Build Quality	**17**/20
Playability	**18**/20
Sound	**18**/20
Value for money	**18**/20
Vibe	**17**/20
TOTAL	**88%**

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input
gain
treble
middle
bass
volume
reverb
Ampeg
Ampeg

AMPEG
GVT15H

From the biggest SVT to the smallest Portaflex, Ampeg always set the standard for valve bass amps - but the guitar amps were never held in such high esteem. Can this head change all that? Review by **Huw Price**

FACTFILE
GVT15H

DESCRIPTION **15W/7.5W valve head with spring reverb, buffered effects loop plus 4, 8 and 16 Ohm outputs. Made in Korea**
PRICES **GVT15H head £486, GVT112E cab £247, GVT15-112 combo £577**

CONTROL PANEL **Gain, Treble, Middle, Treble, Volume and Reverb**
DIMENSIONS **25cm high, 46cm wide, 25.5cm deep**
WEIGHT **12.4kg/27.4lbs**

CONTACT **Loud Technologies**
01494 557398
eusales@loudtechinc.com

While Ampeg bass amps have a user-list that reads like a session booker's address list, with names from James Jamerson downwards, you have to look harder to find the six-string counterparts - such as the Stones, who used Ampeg amps during the 1970s. Make no mistake, some Ampegs were great; the Reverb-O-Rocket, for instance, was a lovely combo which some regard as having the best reverb tone of any amp... ever.

So can the new GVT15H bring the Ampeg name back onto guitarists' radar screens? The specs are certainly encouraging. This is an all-valve head featuring spring reverb and a true bypassable effects loop. Two 12AX7s combine with a pair of 6V6s to produce 15W in tetrode mode and 7.5W in triode mode, with the standby switch tripling up as a power switch.

Externally the GVT15H seems conventional, but the really interesting feature is hidden inside. The term 'Baxandall tone stack' may seem obscure, but it's the equalisation circuit used in many classic Ampeg guitar amps, amongst others. The defining characteristic is that the frequency bands do not overlap, so the tone controls operate independently rather than interacting with each other.

Two 6V6 valves in the power stage give 15W, switchable to 7.5W

The GVT15H's specs are encouraging: all-valve, a spring reverb, a true bypass FX loop, and a Baxandall tone stack

Sounds

The GVT15H overdrives nicely, with saturation coming on gradually. Consequently the Gain and Volume controls can dial in an excellent range of clean tones and several shades of drive. The circuit is configured so that things never go beyond juicy, vintage-style overdrive, and high-gain crunch really isn't on the menu.

The GVT12H's tonal signature isn't directly comparable with any of the three big-name benchmarks, but it encompasses elements from all of them. The clarity and wide open quality has shades of blackface Fender, but without the glassiness; the sweet chiminess in the treble frequencies is Voxy without the wooliness, and the solidity and punch of the midrange and low end ➔

Like this? Try this...

Blackheart
BH15H Handsome Devil
All-valve class A 15W head with 2 x EL84 power valves (switchable from 15W pentode to 7W triode), 4/8/16 ohm speaker outputs and solid state rectifier. Controls include Drive, Level, Treble, Mid, Bass and Presence
RRP **£199**

Egnater
Tweaker 15 Head
A 15W all-valve single channel amplifier with 2 x 6V6 power valves, three 12AX7 preamp valves, Master Volume, Gain and 3-band EQ, Modern/Vintage voicing switch, buffered effects loop, selectable AC, British and American voicing, clean/hot gain selector, Tight & Bright voicing switches
RRP **£350**

Orange
Dark Terror Head
All-valve 15W/7W switchable single-channel head with 3 x ECC83 preamp valves, 2 x EL84 power amp valves. Controls include Gain, Tone and Volume controls – plus there's a valve-buffered effects loop with a single ECC81
RRP **£364**

is reminiscent of low-power Marshalls, but minus the raw aggression.

Although characterful, the GVT12H won't dominate the sound of your instrument. Swapping from one guitar to another we found that very little, if any, tweaking was required: the term 'plug in and play' springs to mind. The half-power setting impressed us because it doesn't suck the life out of the sound. Only a slight bass boost is needed to even things up at half power.

The refined tone controls provide plenty of frequency swing, never sounding artificial or processed, even at the extremes. In fact we found the Baxandall tone stack behaves more like a hi-fi or studio equaliser than a typical amp EQ. The Middle control is particularly influential because there are two well-chosen centre frequencies. Below halfway you're attenuating 800Hz while above halfway you're boosting at 2kHz, so you can scoop the low mids or crank the high mids for bite and extra overdrive.

We enjoyed using a Les Paul with Bass rolled most of the way off and Treble and Middle near maximum. The results were early '70s era ZZ Top meets southern rock, where grinding rock tones collide with country twang and squealing harmonics.

Pulling back Middle and Treble and boosting the Bass veers towards a '70s British rock flavour. With a Gretsch there are hints of Hiwatt, and a Tele generated some cool country rock, Stonesy riffs and Roy Buchanan tones. At lower gain levels the GVT15H has a bluesy side – very expressive with a Stratocaster and a hint of reverb.

Inside the closed-back GVT112E cab lurks a Celestion Vintage 30

With its retro styling, practical modern features and a range of delicious tubey tones, the GVT15H is hard to fault

The dimensions of the cabinet restrict the size of the spring housing, so the reverb isn't very long and lush; surfers and rockabilly types may disagree, but a tighter response and a shorter decay time is well suited for most styles because it won't muddy up your playing.

Finally we should mention the GVT112E cabinet that was supplied with the head. This closed-backed enclosure houses a Celestion Vintage 30, and we think it's a great match for the GVT15H. Much of the tightly-controlled bass thump and larger-than-life tone is surely attributable to this cab. Alternatively, you can opt for the open-backed GVT15-112 combo (£577).

For plain, purposeful looks it's hard to beat Ampeg's '70s designs

Verdict

We had a blast with this amp, enjoying several inspirational days of '70s rock bliss. With its combination of retro styling, practical modern features and a wide range of delicious tubey tones, the GVT15H is hard to fault – and then, when you check the street price, well... it's even harder to resist.

FINAL SCORE

AMPEG GVT15H HEAD	
Build quality	**16**/20
Versatility	**18**/20
Sound	**19**/20
Value for money	**18**/20
Vibe	**18**/20
TOTAL	**89%**

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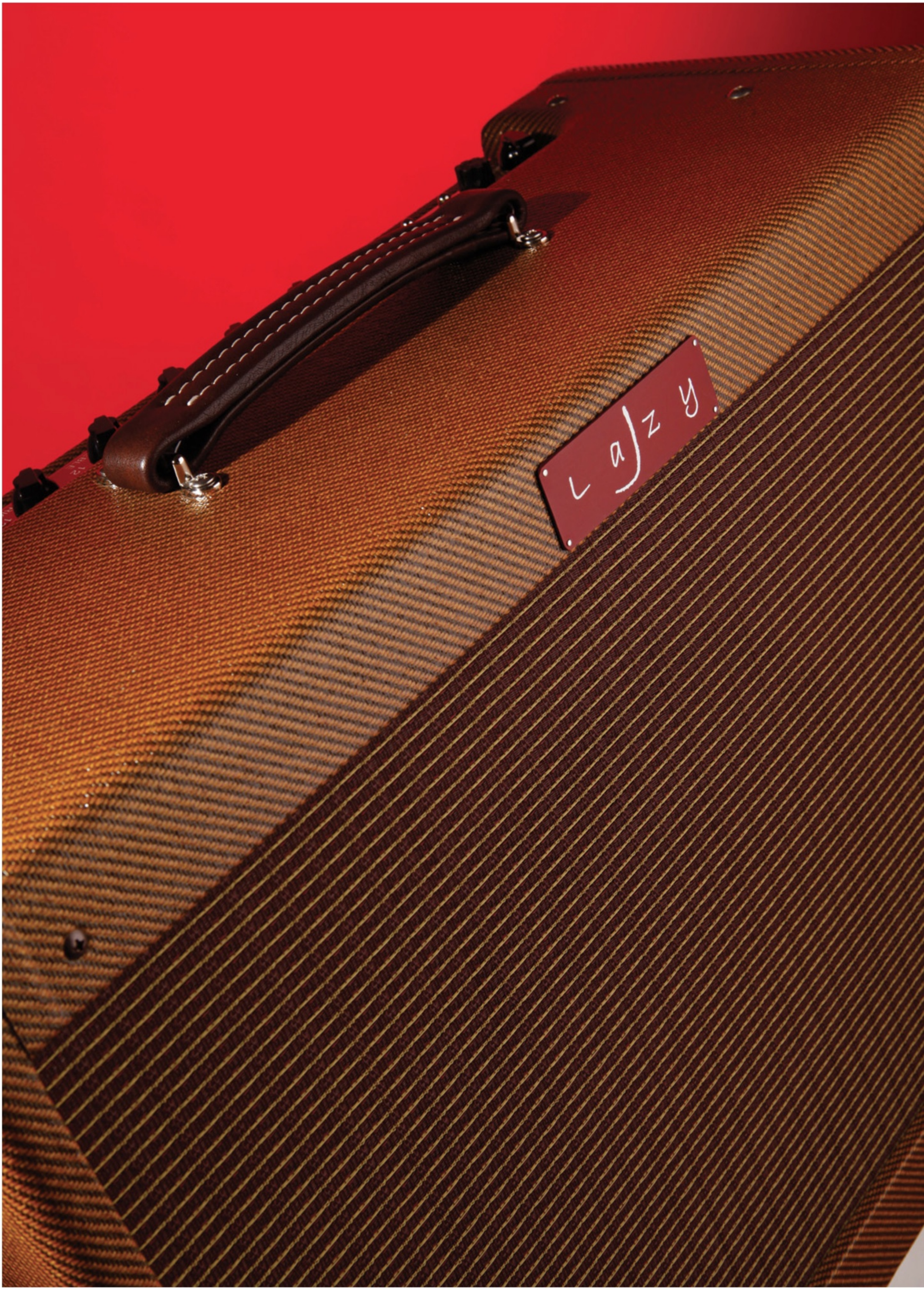
Lazy.

LAZY J
40 Combo

For most gigs a 40W valve amp will nail the perfect-power sweet spot, and Lazy J's latest creation has a knockout tone that's also tweakable for virtually any pickup. Review by **Richard Purvis**

FACTFILE
40 Combo

DESCRIPTION **40W combo with Tayden Ace 50 speaker; 3 x ECC83 and 2 x 6L6 valves plus GZ34 rectifier. Made in the UK**
PRICE **£1980 for basic model, £2520 as reviewed (reverb module £330, tremolo module £210)**

CONTROL PANEL **Normal 1 & 2 and Bright 1 & 2 inputs; Normal Volume, Bright Volume (pull for gain boost), Treble, Bass (pull for bass cut), Middle, Presence; Standby and Power switches; 'Ground' (negative feedback loop) control; high/low voltage switch on bottom panel**
DIMENSIONS **60cm wide, 45cm high, 27cm deep**
WEIGHT **20.2kg/45lbs**

CONTACT **Lazy J Projects**
0843 289 4089
www.lazyjprojects.com

They're getting a bit predictable, those *Guitar & Bass* Gear of the Year Awards. Our favourite amp of last year was Lazy J's 80 combo, and our favourite amp the year before that was its predecessor, the 20. So here's the Lazy J 40, sitting there like the third Chuckle Brother underneath a big sign that says 'This had better be good'. Well, yes, it chuffing well ought to be, but that's not to say it's a shoo-in for the Nobel Peace Prize and the Victoria Cross before we've even switched it on. Who cares about reputations when there are eardrums to be rattled?

No harm in a bit of background first, though. Hand-made in London by American-born Jesse Hoff, the original 20W Lazy J was based on the legendary 5E3 tweed Fender Deluxe but included a few alterations with a view to making the ultimate formula for vintage tone even better. It worked, and grown men crumbled with lust. The 80W version was four times more powerful, but the basic philosophy was unchanged.

This brings us to the 40, which started out as a custom order for 'half of an 80' but has now become a distinct model in itself. The most obvious reference point this time is the 40W version of the all-conquering Fender Twin; surprisingly, the modern reissue of this model – the '57 Twin – has now been discontinued, with only the more expensive Eric Clapton Twinolux version to replace it. Nice timing, Mr Hoff.

We're looking at two 6L6s in the power stage plus a GZ34 on rectification duty and, something you'll certainly never find in an old Fender, a UK-made Tayden Ace 50 speaker. This is a new, 50W-rated version of the Ace 25 (so new that the one in our amp didn't even have the right sticker). Alnico Taydens are superb speakers, but they're supposed to sound like early Celestion Blues – as tweaks to the all-American template go, that's pretty tweaky.

The 40 has Normal and Bright channels which can be bridged with a patch lead in classic style, and as we've seen with the other Lazy Js, you ➔

Our amp comes with the optional tremolo and reverb modules... not cheap, but delicious

The solid pine cabinet's tweedy cloth is so richly lacquered it looks like it's dipped in caramel like a toffee apple

Like this? Try this...

Fender
EC Twinolux
It has twin channels, twin Weber-designed speakers and twin rectifier valves, but the new, Clapton-endorsed version of the tweed Twin is not cheap
RRP **£3083**

Louis Electric
Tremelux
Pushing 27W through a Celestion G12H, this American stunner promises more 6L6-driven tweedy richness and lush tremolo
RRP **£2200**

Victoria
50212
Another tweed type built around 6L6 output valves, this time with a pair Jensen P12Rs handling the 50W-rated output
RRP **£2500 approx**

Patching the channels and using the negative feedback control vastly increases the Lazy J 40's adaptability

can push the volume of one channel to modify the voice of the other. The top panel has two push/pull pots – Bright Volume pulls out for a gain boost, and Bass for a slight thinning-out of the bottom end – plus a 'Ground' control at the far end of the panel. A feature shared with the 80, and also seen on the Louis Electric KR12, this is a level control for the negative feedback loop. It's called Ground because the amp uses a generic chassis and the hole is where the earth switch would be on a '50s Fender; Jesse plans to change this as soon as he can think of a name for it! There's one trick around the back too: a rocker switch that changes the voltages within the preamp circuit for a tweed-to-blackface shift in character.

And there's more, if you can afford it. Our amp came fitted with the optional reverb and tremolo modules, easily bypassed with a double footswitch that includes controls for reverb level and tremo speed. The modules – both valve-powered, naturally – also have controls for reverb tone and tremolo intensity. It's a neat system, and in fact the whole thing looks better than neat, the solid pine cab covered faultlessly with a tweedy cloth so richly lacquered that it appears to have been dipped in caramel like a toffee apple. If you think the pots make a slight noise and the reverb tank isn't tightly fitted, you'd be right, but these aren't design flaws – it's deliberate. Jesse informs us that extra DC load on the pots is the reason they aren't silent, and that the reverb tank is mounted looser than normal to avoid feedback... so there you go.

> This amp is a successful combination of the sweetness and portability of the 20 with the room-shaking punch of the 80

IN USE

With a Tele into the Normal channel and everything at halfway except Volume at 3, we're obviously not dealing with a bedroom amp. The Lazy J belts out clean chords with impressive clarity and a mighty thump of bottom-end power that will topple drunks at the back of the venue. It sounds BIG. The Bright channel brings the high end to life but the low-end is not diminished and, as long as you're canny with the Presence control, it's not too shrill for lively single-coils. Full marks to the Tayden – it's sweet and well-rounded but adds a Vox-like bark to the classic tweed voice.

Things get crunchy pretty quickly – this is not a blackface-style clean machine, although customers can specify a circuit tweak for later break-up. The voltage switch can also make a hint of a difference, but don't expect it to smack you in the face; it's easier to add gain and compression than to take them away, and the best way to do that is just to turn the bugger up, or even patch the channels together and turn them both up. If you're familiar with the delicious creamy crunch of a tweed Bassman, Twin or Deluxe, it's all here. If you're familiar with amps that get ragged, flabby or fizzy when pushed hard, that isn't.

The gain-boost and bass-cut are both perfectly judged for maximum usefulness, and even better is the negative feedback control. Keeping this turned up full to be entirely rid of the loop allows the amp to bloom with unrestrained glory, while dialling some back in has a dramatic 'drying out' effect on the tone. I must admit I wasn't convinced by what I thought originally was a character-sapping function, until Jesse suggested trying it with P90s – sure enough, using the loop to tame the amp brought out the tight snappiness of these pickups in magical style. The reverb and tremolo, meanwhile, are every bit as luscious as you'd expect.

VERDICT

Jesse Hoff is no longer an underdog – with a client list that includes Beck, Bonamassa and Gilmour, you really can't be – so he doesn't need any favours from us. If the new 40 amp were a disappointment, we'd say so. It isn't; it's a successful combination of the sweetness and portability of the 20 with the room-shaking punch of the 80. You wouldn't exactly call it an amp of many voices, but what it does offer is an extraordinary degree of control over the finer details of its timeless tone.

Don't be fooled by the sticker – this is the brand-new 50W version of Tayden's alnico Ace speaker

FINAL SCORE

LAZY J 40 COMBO	
Build Quality	**19**/20
Versatility	**18**/20
Sound	**19**/20
Value for money	**17**/20
Looks	**19**/20
TOTAL	**92%**

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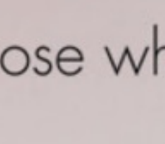

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DIGITECH iStomp

Big news at NAMM 2012 was the pedal that can reinvent itself. Will we see an iStomp on every board in the land? Review by **Martyn Casserly**

The chances are that along your guitar-playing journey you've amassed an effect pedal or two... or 20. Sure, we've all heard the siren song of the multi-FX unit, luring us into her rocky embrace with promises of versatility and constant choice, but where in her wondrous plenitude would we find a place for that battered old Crybaby wah or that trusty overdrive that we've had for years and which sounds just right? So on we go, holy pilgrims of tone, questing for that last piece of the puzzle. But what's this? It seems Digitech has heard of our travails and has sent forth an answer to our anguished cries. Behold: the iStomp.

As the 'i' in the name suggests, the iStomp is the latest guitar gadget to tap into the power, and of course the cultural cachet, of Apple's iOS devices. At first glance it looks like another multi-FX setup that you control via your iDevice, but there's something different about this offering.

The most obvious is the fact that the iStomp is an actual sturdy metal pedal. It has a familiar layout of four control dials, an on-off switch, dual input and output jack sockets, plus the addition of a connector for your Apple tech. Once connected, you download the Digitech Stomp Shop app from iTunes where there are a range of pedals that you can use with the system – but, surprisingly, you can only use one at a time.

Sounds limiting? Well, that's actually the clever bit. Rather than trying to be a complete rig, the iStomp confines you to downloading a single pedal into the internal circuitry of the unit, after which you remove your iOS device and leave the iStomp to do its business like any another stompbox. Put it in your existing chain and it behaves like a high-quality, purpose-built effect.

But why don't you just buy a normal pedal instead? Well, if you decide you want a change then all you need do is download another effect into the iStomp (available for £4.99 from iTunes) and the pedal is completely different – so you can experiment away without costly investments in new pedals. It's not often that we come across new ideas that seem genuinely useful and practical, but this looks like it could be one.

It's not often we come across new ideas that seem genuinely useful and practical, but this looks like it could be one

Sounds

Digitech have included two pedals free with the iStomp – the Total Recall delay and the Redline Overdrive. Simply select either model on your iDevice and it's loaded into the unit, changing the controls in the process.

Both the ready-supplied effects are pretty cool. The delay has a tap tempo; it provides clean digital repeats, and does lovely wild oscillations when you fiddle with the knobs. The Redline is an aggressive, beefy overdrive with plenty of oomph and teeth that can coax oodles of musical feedback out of a good amp. You can audition any of the other effects for five minutes by selecting them from the menu on the Stomp Shop App. Among our favourites were the Amp Driver, the Vintage Tape Delay, and the Stone Phase.

Verdict

The iStomp has impressed us. The less-is-more approach feels like it will actually work in real-life settings, and the built-in ability to change your rig or dabble with new pedals for less than the cost of a magazine is very tempting. To be fair the initial investment isn't cheap, and if you go crazy and buy all the pedals then you'll soon be eating Tesco value beans, but that's not the way to approach the iStomp. Instead, choose your pedals carefully and use the ones that fill the gap in your existing chain. Could this really be the final part of that age-old puzzle? Maybe...

FINAL SCORE

DIGITECH ISTOMP	
Build Quality	**18**/20
Playability	**18**/20
Sound	**18**/20
Value for money	**17**/20
Looks	**16**/20
TOTAL	**87%**

FACTFILE

Digitech iStomp

DESCRIPTION **Programmable effects unit. Made in USA.**

PRICE **£159 (additional pedal models cost £4.99 each via iTunes)**

CONTROLS **Four rotary dials which are contextually linked to the pedal loaded into the unit. Tap tempo when relevant. Needs to be linked to an iOS device running version 4 or above to load pedal models**

CONTACT **Sound Technology 01462 480000 www.soundtech.co.uk**

Like this? Try this...

TC Electronic
Toneprint Range
We can't think of anything exactly like the iStomp, but TC Electronic's Toneprint range allows you to download free, specially tweaked settings for their pedals which have been created by players such as John Petrucci, Paul Gilbert and Troy Van Leeuwen
RRP **Starts around £100**

Line 6
Custom Tone Range
Line 6 also offers the ability to download free pedal models that have been designed by star players or even normal folks like us. Rather than a standalone pedal like the iStomp, the Custom Tone pedals would simply expand the options on your Pod floorboard, desktop, or even the weeny Pocket Pod
RRP **Prices start at around £85 for the Pocket Pod**

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Finish: Black € 173.- £ 144.-
order code 205002

Danelectro Dead On 67 Guitar
Electric guitar
Upgraded reissue, solid basswood body, maple neck, rosewood fretboard, 21 frets, double action truss rod, Danelectro vibrato with rosewood bridge, 2 volume and 2 tone controls, 3-way toggle switch.

Finish: Black € 189.- £ 158.-
o. code 228284
Finish: Limey € 189.- £ 158.-
o. code 228287
Finish: Butterscotch € 189.- £ 158.-
order code 228283

Danelectro DE 59 Dano Black
Electric guitar
Masonite body/back/top, maple neck, rosewood fretboard, 21 frets, pro hardware, 2 beefed-up lipstick pickups.

Finish: Black € 215.- £ 179.-
o. code 111872
Finish: Keen Green € 215.- £ 179.-
o. code 111877
Finish: Burgundy € 191.- £ 159.-
o. code 111878
Finish: Blue € 215.- £ 179.-
order code 111875

Danelectro Wild Thing
Electric guitar
Plywood body, tape binding, maple neck, rosewood fretboard, 21 frets, 2 lipstick single-coils, traditional bridge with rosewood saddle, toggle switch.

Candy Apple Red € 239.- £ 199.-
o. code 265345
Black € 239.- £ 199.-
o. code 265347
Candy Apple Blue € 239.- £ 199.-
order code 265346

Danelectro Dead On 67 Baritone
Electric guitar
Upgraded Reissue, solid basswood body, bolt-on maple neck, rosewood fretboard, 24 frets, double action truss rod, 2 lipstick pickups, 2 volume- and 2 tone controls.

Finish: Cobalt Blue € 239.- £ 199.-
o. code 228291
Finish: Black € 239.- £ 199.-
o. code 228292
Finish: Limey € 239.- £ 199.-
order code 228289

Danelectro Reissue 59 Double Cutaway
Electric guitar
Masonite body (back and top), poplar neck, rosewood fretboard, notched metal base with a rosewood saddle, 21 frets, 2x beefed-up lipstick pickups.

Finish: Black € 259.- £ 216.-
order code 243060
Finish: Copper € 215.- £ 179.-
order code 243063
Finish: White „Seal" € 215.- £ 179.-
order code 243065

Epiphone Les Paul Standard
Electric guitar
Mahogany & alder body, mahogany neck, rosewood fretboard, trapezoid inlays, 2x humbuckers, chrome hardware, tune-o-matic bridge, stopbar tailpiece, 3-way toggle switch, 2x volume controls, 2x tone controls. Finish: Ebony

order code 124838 € 295.- £ 246.-

Gibson Explorer Melody Maker
Electric guitar
Maple body, set mahogany neck, Melody Maker neck profile, maple fretboard, 22 frets, scale 628mm, Seymour Duncan HB-103 ceramic humbucker, chrome hardware, incl. gigbag, made in USA.

Finish: Satin Ebony
order code 264325
Finish: Satin Blue € 395.- £ 329.-
order code 264324

Gibson Flying V Melody Maker
Electric guitar
Maple body, set mahogany neck, Melody Maker neck profile, maple fretboard, 22 frets, scale 628mm, Seymour Duncan HB-103 ceramic humbucker, chrome hardware, incl. gigbag, made in USA.

Finish: Satin Ebony
order code 264328
Finish: Satin Blue € 395.- £ 329.-
order code 264329

Fender Standard Strat 2011 MN
Electric guitar
Made in Mexico, alder body, maple neck (modern C shape), 21 medium frets, scale: 648mm, saddle width: 42mm, 3x standard single-coils, 5-way switch, vintage-style synchronized tremolo, 3-ply parchment pickguard.

Finish: Arctic White
order code 270956
Finish: Black € 458.- £ 382.-
order code 270949

Gibson SG Special Faded
Electric guitar
Chrome hardware, tune-o-matic bridge, stop tailpiece, mahogany body, mahogany neck, 22 frets, dot inlays, 2x volume & 2 tone controls, 3-way toggle switch, AlNiCo 490R humbucker (neck), AlNiCo 490T humbucker (bridge), includes gig bag.
Finish: Worn Brown
o. code 168315
Finish: Worn Cherry € 598.- £ 499.-
o. code 153687

Gibson LP Studio '50 Tribute DB TM
Electric guitar
Exclusive made for Thomann, chambered mahogany body, maple top, dark back, 50s mahogany neck, toasted maple fretboard, 22 frets, scale: 628mm, 2 volume and 2 tone control, 3 way toggle switch, Gibson 490R humbucker (neck), Gibson 498T humbucker (bridge), incl. gigbag. Finish: Satin Ebony.

order code 270874 € 645.- £ 538.-

Gibson Les Paul Studio Limited
Electric guitar
Les Paul model, carved top, mahogany body, set mahogany neck, rosewood fretboard, 490R/498T AlNiCo humbuckers, tune-o-matic bridge, stopbar tailpiece, chrome hardware, includes original case.

Worn Brown € 645.- £ 538.-
o. code 198816
Worn Cherry € 645.- £ 538.-
order code 225129

Fender Classic Player Baja Tele
Electric guitar
Classic series, ash body, one-piece soft ‚V' shape maple neck, maple fretboard, 21 medium jumbo frets, chrome hardware, original vintage Tele bridge, 1x custom shop ‚Twisted' Tele® single coil (neck) & 1x Custom Shop Broadcaster single coil (bridge) pickups, tone & volume controls, includes case. Finish: Vintage Blonde

order code 196765 € 666.- £ 555.-

Gibson LP Studio 60's Tribute DB
Electric guitar
Chambered mahogany body, 60's slim taper mahogany neck profile, dark back satin, baked maple fretboard, 2 Gibson P-90 single coils, Grover green key tuners, 2 volume and 2 tone controls, chrome hardware, incl. Gibson deluxe gigbag.
Honeyburst € 695.- £ 580.-
o. code 271698
Satin Vintage Sunburst € 645.- £ 538.-
order code 276938

Gibson SG Standard
Electric guitar
Mahogany body, set mahogany neck, rosewood fretboard, 22 frets, 629mm scale, trapezoid inlays, chrome hardware, tune-o-matic bridge, stopbar tailpiece, 2x humbucker pickups, 2x volume & 2x tone controls, 3-way toggle switch, includes case. Finish: Heritage Cherry

order code 122008 € 990.- £ 826.-

Gibson Les Paul Studio
Electric guitar
Les Paul model, mahogany body, set mahogany neck, rosewood fretboard, 22 frets, 2x humbucker pickups, chrome hardware, incl. case.

Finish: Ebony € 1145.- £ 955.-
o. code 134274
Finish: Fireburst € 1145.- £ 955.-
order code 211278

Line6 James Tyler JTV-69 Variax
Electric modeling guitar
ST style, alder body, maple neck, rosewood fretboard, 22 medium jumbo frets, dot inlays, Graph Tech TUSQ XL nut, stoptail bridge, wounded Alnico humbucker (bridge) and Vintage single-coils (neck and middle), 5-way toggle switch, finish: black, incl. padded gigbag, Line6 Workbench, power supply and Variax Workbench USB adapter.

order code 252063 € 1245.- £ 1038.-

Gibson Les Paul Studio Pro Plus
Electric guitar
European wide exclusive at Thomann, mahogany body, AA figured maple top, set mahogany neck, 60's Slim taper neck profil, rosewood fretboard, 22 frets, 490R and Burstbucker Pro humbucker (both coil split), Grover Kidney tuners, chrome hardware, incl. case.
Red Velvet € 1290.- £ 1076.-
o. code 264310
Transl. Black € 1290.- £ 1076.-
order code 264311

Gibson SG '61 Reissue
Electric guitar
Mahogany body, set mahogany neck, rosewood fretboard, 22 frets, 629mm scale, trapeze inlays, chrome hardware, tune-o-matic bridge, stopbar tailpiece, 2x ‚57 Classic humbuckers, 2x volume &, 2x tone controls, 3-way toggle switch, includes case. Finish: Heritage Cherry

order code 132373 € 1439.- £ 1200.-

Gibson Les Paul Traditional
Electric guitar
Mahogany body, carved maple top, set mahogany neck with rounded ‚50s profile, rosewood fretboard, 22 frets, 628mm scale, trapeze perloid inlays, '57 Classic (neck) & '57 Classic Plus (bridge) humbucker pickups, TonePro tuners, includes black snakeskin case. Finish: Ebony.

order code 214187 € 1890.- £ 1576.-

Gibson Les Paul Standard 2008
Electric guitar
Mahogany body, AA grade figured maple top, mahogany neck, rosewood fretboard, 629mm scale, 43mm nut width, trapezoid inlays, 22 frets, 1x Burstbucker Pro 2 (bridge) & 1x Burstbucker Pro 1 (neck), TonePros locking bridge and string holder, Grover locking machine heads, incl. black snakeskin case. Finish: Heritage Cherry Sunburst.

order code 214842 € 2333.- £ 1946.-

Gretsch G6128T-TVP Power Jet
Electric guitar
Arched laminated maple top, semi-hollow one-piece mahogany body, ebony fretboard, 22 frets, 2x TV Jones PowerTron pickups, pinned rosewood based adjust-o-matic bridge, Gretsch Bigsby B3C vibrato tailpiece, chrome hardware, incl. G6238 deluxe hardshell case. Finish: Black.

order code 190926 € 2444.- £ 2038.-

Gibson Les Paul Custom
Electric guitar
Les Paul model, mahogany body, carved maple top, set mahogany neck, richlite fretboard, mother of pearl block inlays, 22 frets, gold hardware, 490R humbucker (neck), 498T humbucker (bridge), 3-way toggle switch, includes case. Finish: Ebony

order code 147148 € 2980.- £ 2485.-

Gibson Firebird-X
Electric guitar
Ash body, maple neck, RoboHead tuners, TOM bridge/Piezo robot guitar, stop bar robot tailpiece, pickups: FBX Alnico II, FBX Ceramic and FBX Alnico V, 5-way-switch, incl. case, 2x foot controller, battery, Ableton Live and Guitar Rig 4 Pro.

Finish: Blue-volution
order code 257297
Finish: Red-volution € 3390.- £ 2827.-
order code 257296

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Fax: +49 9546 9223-24

The Thomann services

- 30-day money back guarantee
- free shipping to the UK and Ireland on orders above £159

Fender CD-60
Acoustic guitar
Laminated spruce top, back and sides laminated mahogany, nato neck, sonokeling fretboard, scale: 643mm, saddle width: 43mm.

Black
o. code 190654
€ 119.- £ 99.-
Natural
o. code 190655
€ 119.- £ 99.-
Sunburst
o. code 190656
€ 119.- £ 99.-

Harley Benton JC503CEQ
Acoustic guitar
Jumbo style, cutaway, solid spruce top, rosewood back & sides, mahogany neck, rosewood fretboard, block inlays, piezo pickup system with 4-band EQ preamp. Finish: Natural High Polish

order code 187498
€ 149.- £ 124.-

Fender CD-60 CE
Acoustic guitar
Dreadnought, cutaway, laminated spruce top, nato back and sides, nato neck, sonokeling fretboard, active Fender FTE3-TN preamp with volume/bass/mid/treble controls, built-in tuner.

Finish: Black
o. code 190659
€ 199.- £ 166.-
Finish: Natural
o. code 190658
€ 199.- £ 166.-
Finish: Sunburst
order code 190657
€ 199.- £ 166.-

Takamine EG440SC
Acoustic guitar
NEX body with cutaway, solid spruce top, laminated mahogany back and sides, pickup with TP4T preamp system, finish: natural.

order code 198096
€ 311.- £ 259.-

Yamaha APX500II
Acoustic guitar
Cutaway, maple top, nato back and sides, ivory binding, black headstock, nato neck, fretboard rosewood, dot inlays, rosewood bridge, 22 frets, scale: 634mm, saddle width: 43mm, preamp „System 65", piezo pickup, machine heads Yamaha die-cast chrome (TM-29-T), finish: black.

order code 259580
€ 325.- £ 271.-

Fender Jimmy Dale Signature Kingman SCE
Acoustic guitar
Cutaway, solid mahogany top, 'C' shaped maple neck, rosewood fretboard, block inlays, bone nut, scale: 642mm, nut width: 42mm, 20 frets, Fishman Presys pickup system and active on-board preamp with tuner, incl. case. Finish: Natural.

order code 241210
€ 469.- £ 391.-

Martin DCX1E
Acoustic guitar
Cutaway, solid Sitka spruce top, mahogany back & sides, HPL pattern textured finish, Stratabond neck, rosewood fretboard, 20 frets, 645mm scale, 42.8mm saddle width, tortoiseshell pickguard, chrome tuners, Fishman® Classic 4 Sonicore pickup system.

order code 173134
€ 689.- £ 575.-

Martin Guitars D-1 GT
Acoustic guitar
Dreadnought model, solid sitka spruce top, back and sides solid sapele, modified hybrid X scalloped bracing, stratabond neck, rosewood fretboard, 20 frets, scale: 645mm, saddle width: 43mm, incl. case, finish: natural gloss top.

order code 261819
€ 877.- £ 731.-

Takamine EF341SC
Acoustic guitar
Bruce Springsteen model, dreadnought body with cutaway, solid cedar top, maple back and sides, rosewood fretboard, mother of pearl snowflake dots, CT4B preamp with tuner and pickup, finish: black high-gloss, incl. case.

order code 152211
€ 1022.- £ 852.-

Martin D-16GT
Acoustic guitar
Solid Sitka spruce top, solid mahogany back & sides, select hardwood neck, black micarta fretboard and bridge, 20 frets (14 clear), chrome tuners, includes hardshell case. Finish: Natural High Gloss

order code 142158
€ 1085.- £ 905.-

Martin Guitars D-16RGT
Acoustic guitar
Solid spruce top, rosewood back and sides, solid east Indian rosewood bridge and fretboard, 20 frets (14 clear), nut width: 43mm, chrome tuners, incl. hardshell case, high gloss finish.

order code 235615
€ 1179.- £ 983.-

Fender American Kingman USA Select LTD
Acoustic guitar
Limited 150pcs worldwide, solid Engelman spruce top, solid mahogany back and sides, body binding aged white, maple neck, rosewood fretboard, Fishman Sonitone pickup system, finish: sunburst, incl. case, leather strap and certificate of authenticity.

order code 273759
€ 1539.- £ 1284.-

Martin D-28
Acoustic guitar
The classic dreadnought model, solid Sitka spruce top, solid East Indian rosewood back & sides, solid mahogany neck, solid ebony fretboard, 20 frets (14 clear), solid ebony bridge, includes case. Finish: Natural

order code 150353
€ 1925.- £ 1605.-

Takamine TNV460SC
Acoustic guitar
NEX body with cutaway, solid bear claw spruce top, solid Indian rosewood back & sides, ebony fretboard, snowflake inlays, CTP-1 Cool Tube preamp, gold tuners, abalone rosette, includes case. Finish: Natural High Gloss

order code 175766
€ 2066.- £ 1723.-

Gibson Hummingbird
Acoustic guitar
Modern classic, solid Sitka spruce top, solid mahogany back & sides, mahogany neck, rosewood fretboard, 20 frets, 629mm scale, 43.8mm saddle width, nickel Grover kidney tuners, active electronics with soundhole mounted volume control, includes case. Finish: Heritage Cherry Sunburst

o. code 104450
€ 2390.- £ 1993.-

Maton EBG808
Acoustic guitar
Tommy Emmanuel signature, orchestra model, solid sitka spruce top, back and sides solid queensland maple, queensland maple neck, rosewood fretboard, scale: 650mm, saddle width: 44,1mm, Maton APMic pickup system, finish: natural satin. Made in Australia.

order code 239744
€ 2790.- £ 2327.-

Martin Guitars OMJM John Mayer
Acoustic guitar
John Mayer signature model, 000-45 style, solid Engelmann spruce top, solid indian rosewood back and sides, ebony fretboard, Martin Gold Plus Natural 1 pickup system, incl. 533 Geib style case. Finish: Natural.

order code 109994
€ 2950.- £ 2460.-

Gibson SJ-200 Standard
Acoustic guitar
New edition modern classic, handmade, solid sitka spruce top, back and sides solid eastern curly maple, maple neck, rosewood fretboard, crown inlays, 20 frets, active Aura Ellipse electronics with soundhole-mounted volume control, includes case, finish: vintage sunburst V.O.S.

order code 185825
€ 3090.- £ 2577.-

Martin Guitars J12-40E Special
Acoustic guitar
Jumbo, solid Sitka spruce top, solid East Indian rosewood back & sides, ebony fretboard, 20 frets, solid east indian rosewood headstock with C.F. Martin abalone pearl inlay, modified low oval neck shape, bone nut, solid ebony bridge, gold enclosed tuners, incl. case. Finish: natural high-gloss with aging toner.

order code 248610
€ 3699.- £ 3085.-

Gibson Western Classic Prewar 200
Acoustic guitar
Super jumbo model, AAA-grade sitka spruce top, back and sides AAA-grade Madagascar rosewood, hand-scalloped bracing, fretboard ebony, gold waverly tuners, historic flower pot peghead inlay, finish: vintage Sunburst Nitrocellulose, incl. case.

order code 237840
€ 4980.- £ 4153.-

Danelectro Dano 63 Shortscale
Bass guitar
Reissue model, maple neck, rosewood fretboard, 2x ‚63 lipstick-style Alnico pickups, die cast tuners, pro hardware. Finish: Red Burst

order code 205015
€ 215.- £ 179.-

Höfner Ignition Beatles Bass
4-string bass guitar
Hollow maple body, spruce top, rosewood fretboard, 22 frets, 2x Höfner humbucking pickups, nickel hardware, rhythm/solo-switch, control plate with 2 volume controls.

Vintage Sunburst
order code 232784
€ 244.- £ 204.-
Black
order code 232783
Vintage Sunb./lefthanded
order code 232785
€ 244.- £ 204.-

Danelectro Dead On 58 Longhorn Bass
Bass guitar
Upgraded reissue, masonite body, bolt-on maple neck, rosewood fretboard, 24 frets, scale: 755mm, rosewood bridge, souped-up lipstick pickups, 2x stacked volume and tone controls. Finish: Copper Burst.

order code 228497
€ 259.- £ 216.-

Fender Squier Frank Bello Jazz Bass
4-string bass guitar
Squier artist series, Frank Bello (Anthrax) signature model, agathis body, maple neck, rosewood fretboard, 20 medium frets, 1 split single coil and 1 Jazz Bass pickup. Finish: Black.

order code 112751
€ 299.- £ 249.-

Fender Std. Jazz Bass MN 2011
4-string bass guitar
Made in Mexico, alder body, modern C shape maple neck, maple fretboard, 20 frets, 2 standard J-bass single coils, standard vintage style bridge, scale: 864mm (long scale), saddle width: 38mm. Finish: Black high-gloss.

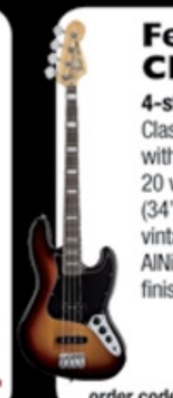
order code 271345
€ 629.- £ 525.-

Fender Roger Waters Precision
Signature bass guitar
Alder body, bolt-on maple neck, thick „C" shape, 20 medium frets, Seymour Duncan basslines SPB-3 quarter pund single-coil P-bass pickup, chrome/black hardware, machined brass saddle, vintage 70´s fender tuners, black standard 4-saddle bridge, black pickguard, finish: black, incl. deluxe gigbag.

order code 254767
€ 709.- £ 591.-

Fender '50s Precision Bass
4-string bass guitar
Classic series, alder body, 1-piece maple neck with C-shape, 20 vintage style frets, 1 Precision bass split single-coil, American Vintage Precision bass bridge, vintage style reverse tuners, nickel/chrome hardware, gold anodized aluminium pickguard, scale 864mm (34"), incl. deluxe gigbag. Finish: 2-Tone Sunburst.

order code 185299
€ 769.- £ 641.-



Fender '70s Classic Jazz Bass
4-string bass guitar
Classic series, alder body, maple neck with '70s C shape, rosewood fretboard, 20 vintage style frets, scale: 864mm (34"), saddle width: 38mm (1.50"), 2 vintage style Jazz Bass single-coils with AlNiCo magnets, incl. deluxe gigbag, finish: 3-tone sunburst.

order code 212976
€ 789.- £ 658.-

Steinberger Guitars Synapse XS-15FPA Custom
5-string headless bass guitar
Flamed maple body, set CybroSonic graphite neck, phenolic fretboard, 24 frets, scale: 34", 2x EMG-40-P5 active pickups, volume control, mag/piezo PU blend, active hi and lo cut/boost, finish: translucent amber, incl. gigbag.

order code 258933
€ 821.- £ 685.-

Gibson Les Paul Oversized Bass
4-string bass guitar
Mahogany body, maple top, mahogany neck, rosewood fretboard, scale: 864mm, 2 TB+ ceramic pickups, Grover bass tuners, 2 volume and 2 tone controls, chrome hardware, incl. Gibson hardshell case.

Gold Top
o. code 264350
€ 1290.- £ 1076.-
H. Cherry Sunburst
order code 264351
€ 1333.- £ 1112.-

Sandberg California TM4
4-string bass guitar
Ash body, maple neck, rosewood fretboard with block inlays, chrome hardware, pearl white pickguard, 1 Delano J-Style pickup and 1 power humbucker, Sandberg 2-band EQ, active/passive switchable, finish: satin blueburst, incl. gigbag.

order code 221894
€ 1350.- £ 1126.-

Fender American Deluxe J-Bass V
5-string bass guitar
Ash body, modern C-shape maple neck, rosewood fretboard, 21 frets, 2x new N3 noiseless pickups, volume, pan pot, treble boost/cut, midrange boost/cut, bass boost/cut, active/passive mini toggle switch, 3-ply black pickguard, Fender light weight vintage style tuners, finish: wine transparent, incl. SKB molded case, cable, strap and strap locks.

order code 246573
€ 1729.- £ 1442.-

Music Man Stingray 4
4-string bass guitar
Ash body, bolt-on maple neck, 1x Music Man pickup, electronics with 3-band EQ, black pickguard, includes case. Finish: Natural.

order code 181495
€ 1933.- £ 1612.-

Music Man Stingray 5
5-string bass guitar
Ash body, bolt-on maple neck, 3-band EQ, single and dummy coil pickups, serial/parallel pickup configurations, includes case. Finish: Black.

order code 103886
€ 1999.- £ 1667.-

Sadowsky MV4-WL Will Lee
4-string bass guitar
Ash body, maple neck, maple fretboard, 22 frets, chrome hardware, D´tuner, Sadowsky J-style pickups, Sadowsky preamp with vintage tone control and midboost, incl. case, finish: black.

order code 257554
€ 2890.- £ 2410.-

HOT DEALS

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STRINGS

Harley Benton Valuestrings

168992	009 - 042	£ 0.79
168993	010 - 046	£ 0.79

Pyramid

128237	009 - 042	£ 2.58
148111	009 - 046	£ 2.40
128238	010 - 046	£ 2.58
132702	011 - 048	£ 2.79

Harley Benton

with extra E1 and B2 strings

156199	009 - 042	£ 2.78
156200	010 - 046	£ 2.78

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158969	011 - 050	£ 3.54
181291	012 - 052	£ 3.92

Dean Markley

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104562	2508 009 - 046	£ 3.17
104565	2503B 010 - 046	£ 3.17
104564	2504B 010 - 052	£ 3.17

D´Addario EXL

104554	120 009 - 042	£ 3.70
101428	125 009 - 046	£ 3.46
104555	110 010 - 046	£ 3.70
131962	140 010 - 052	£ 4.17

Ernie Ball

104572	2223 009 - 042	£ 4.42
104570	2222 009 - 046	£ 4.42
104573	2221 010 - 046	£ 4.42

Elixir Nanoweb

152173	009 - 042	£ 9.20
152174	009 - 046	£ 9.20
152175	010 - 046	£ 8.80
152177	011 - 049	£ 9.-

Electric bass strings

156186	Warwick Red Label 040 - 100	£ 8.30
144460	Warwick Red Label 045 - 105	£ 8.30
147931	Warwick Red Label 040 - 130	£ 9.90
157147	Warwick Red Label 045 - 135	£ 11.20
140180	GHS 3045 M 045 - 105	£ 15.30
160651	GHS 3045 5M-DYB 045 - 130	£ 18.30
104535	Rotosound 045 - 105	£ 15.30
142786	Rotosound 045 - 130	£ 19.10
122057	Ernie Ball 045 - 100	£ 19.90
141174	Ernie Ball 045 - 105	£ 19.90
121135	Ernie Ball 045 - 130	£ 24.-
152178	Elixir Nanoweb 040 - 095	£ 35.-
171440	Elixir Nanoweb 045 - 100	£ 35.-
152179	Elixir Nanoweb 045 - 105	£ 35.-

GUITAR CARE

Thomann string winder
For faster string winding
order code 122787 £ 1.20

Harley Benton Guitar Care
Guitar cleaner, 100ml, even for nitro lacquers
order code 196948 £ 3.09

Dunlop Formula 65 Polish
Polish & cleaner for guitar and bass.
order code 141577 £ 3.98

D'Andrea Lemon Oil
Cleaning oil, fretboard conditioner for guitar and bass
order code 150545 £ 3.14

GHS Fast Fret
Fingerboard, string and neck cleaner, silicone free.
order code 104761 £ 4.00

Lead Foot SB201
A/B switch for guitar and bass
order code 134241 £ 15.30

GIGBAG & CASE

Thomann Economy

Standard model, large pocket for accessories, notes and strings, colour: black

145669	Classic	£ 7.90
178496	Western	£ 7.90
133671	Electric guitar	£ 7.90
142774	Electric bass	£ 7.90

Thomann Standard

20mm padding, bottom protector, black velvet lining, backbag straps.

121546	Classic	£ 14.40
130405	3/4 Classic	£ 14.40
121547	Western	£ 14.40
121548	Electric guitar	£ 14.40
157096	Flying V	£ 14.40
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142783	Jumbo	£ 23.-
121814	Acoustic bass	£ 24.-

Thomann Deluxe Profi

Gig bags with 30mm padding, 5cm wide padded straps, foldable backbag straps, 2 outside pockets, 2 additional accessory pockets.

142777	Electric guitar	£ 19.10
142775	Classic	£ 19.10
142776	Western	£ 19.10
142778	Electric bass	£ 19.10

Fender Frontman 15R

Electric guitar combo

15W, 1x 8" special design speaker, dual selectable channels, volume, gain, drive, 3 band EQ, headphone output. Dimensions: 31.8 x 33.6 x 18.4cm (HxWxD). Weight: 6.8kg

order code 155460 € 69.- £ 58.-

Marshall MG30CFX

Guitar combo

30W, 1x 10" speaker, 4 channels (storable presets) with 3-band EQ, digital effects, digital reverb, headphone output, MP3/line in, dimenisons: WHD 48 x 42 x 22,5cm, weight: 10,8kg, finish: carbon kevlar.

o. code 270799 € 159.- £ 133.-

Marshall MG15CF
15W, 1x 8", 2 channels.
order code 270764 € 85.- £ 71.-

Fender FM212R

Guitar combo

Frontman series, 100W, 2x 12" speakers, 3 channels (normal, drive and extra drive), FX loop, includes 2-way footswitch. Dimensions: 49.5 x 68.5 x 27cm. Weight: 21.7kg

order code 167017 € 199.- £ 166.-

Roland Cube-40XL

Electric guitar combo with amp modeling

40W, 10" custom speaker, 2 channels (+ 2 storable settings), 10 amp models, 8 effects, solo function, 3-band EQ, 80 sec. looper with endless overdubs, power squeezer, aux in, manual and chromatic tuner, 6 footswitch connections.

order code 254100 € 218.- £ 182.-

Roland Cube-20XL
20", 8", 6 amp models
order code 254102 € 158.- £ 132.-

Bugera V22

All valve combo

22W, 12" speaker, 2 channels, 3x 12AX7 preamp valves, 2x EL 84 power amp valves, clean, gain and volume control, 3-band EQ, 1x master control, 1x presence control, built-in digital reverb (adjustable), normal and bright input, impedance switchable between 4, 8 and 16Ω, triode and pentode mode, 2x external speaker outputs, footswitch input, effect loop, incl. footswitch.

order code 252074 € 255.- £ 213.-

Fender Mustang III

Electric guitar combo

100W, 1x12" Celestion G12T-100 speaker, 8Ω, 1 channel with 100 presets, data wheel, softkeys for amp select, stomp edit, modulation edit, delay edit, reverb edit, utility, save, exit and tap/tuner, 11 modulation, 9 delay and 10 reverb effects, headphone output, speaker emulated USB output, weight: 16,3kg, incl. Ableton Live Lite 8 Fender Edition and IK Multimedia, incl. 2-button footswitch.

order code 258891 € 269.- £ 224.-

Bugera 6260-212

All valve guitar combo

120W, 2 channels, 2x 12" Bugera speaker, 4x 6L6 power valves (convertible to EL34), 5x 12AX7 preamp valves, reverb and presence control for each channel, impedance switch (4/8/16Ω), includes footswitch for channel and reverb. Dimensions: 51.9 x 68.8 x 24.8cm. Weight: 28.5kg.

order code 206768 € 285.- £ 238.-

Line 6 Spider IV 75-112

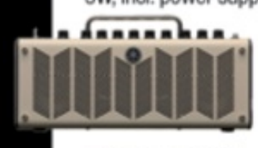
Modeling guitar combo

75W, 1x12" speaker, 16 amp models, 64 programmable presets (with FBV shortboard), 400 presets (200 song-based, 200 from famous artists), LC display, FX processor with 6 different effects (4 simultaneous), built-in tuner, headphone/DI out with speaker simulation, CD/mp3 in (mini-jack), dimensions DWH: 26,4 x 50,5 x 45,7cm, weight: 15.5kg.

order code 231416 € 289.- £ 241.-

Yamaha THR10

Universal guitar combo w/ USB interface



For electric guitar, acoustic guitar or bass guitars, 5 amp simulations, bass and acoustic simulation, 3-band EQ, 5 user memories, chromatic tuner, headphone out, aux in, USB to use as interface, 2x 8cm fullrange speaker, 2x 5W, incl. power supply, USB cable, cable and Cubase AI, dimensions WHD: 36 x 18.4 x 14cm, weight: 2.8kg.

order code 271803 € 295.- £ 246.-

Bugera 6262-212

All valve guitar combo

120W, 2x 12" Bugera speakers, 2 channels, 4x 6L6 power amp valves (convertible to EL34), 6x 12AX7 preamp tubes, reverb and presence controls per channel, impedance switch (4, 8 and 16Ω), includes reverb/channel footswitch. Dimensions: 51.8 x 68.8 x 24.8cm. Weight: 28.5kg.

order code 206034 € 322.- £ 269.-

Fender Hot Rod Deluxe III

Electric guitar combo

40W, 1x 12" Celestion speaker, 3x 12AX7 and 2x 6L6 valves, 3 channels, controls for master volume, reverb, master, middle, bass, treble and presence, drive select switch, drive volume and bright switch, effect loop, incl. footswitch and amp cover, dimensions HWD: 47,6 x 59,7 x 26,7cm, weight: 20,41kg.

order code 251401 € 825.- £ 688.-

Vox AC30 C2

30W all-valve guitar combo

2x 12" Vox GSH12-30 speakers, 2 ins (boost & normal), input link-switch to combine both channels, volume, brilliance switch, boost volume, treble, EQ, standard/custom switch, bass, reverb, tremolo, tone cut, master volume, standby and power switch, outs for external speakers, output bias, FX loop, includes footswitch. Weight: 32kg

order code 180600 € 858.- £ 716.-

Bugera 333 Infinium

All-valve electric guitar head

120W, 3 channels, 4x 6L6 poweramp valves, 4x 12AX7 preamp valves, 3-band EQ, poweramp damping, FX loop, switchable impedance (4, 8 and 16Ω), integrated reverb, valves no longer need to be matched in pairs, different types of valves can be combined in the preamp stage of any valve amplfier, incl. foot switch.

order code 269560 € 425.- £ 354.-

Engl E315 Gig Master 15 Head

Guitar tube head

15W, 2 channels, 3-band EQ, mid boost switch, preamp ECC83S and poweramp 2x EL84, effect loop, balanced line out (6,3mm jack) with speaker simulation, built-in power soak (full power - 5W - 1W - zero), speaker outs for 8 and 16Ω, dimensions WHD: 42.5 x 20 x 22.5cm, weight: 8,9kg.

order code 246407 € 499.- £ 416.-

Engl Fireball 100

All-valve guitar head

100W, 2 channels, controls for clean gain, lead gain, bass, middle, treble, lead volume, master A, master B and presence, switches for bright, bottom and mid boost, channel select, adjustable noise gate, switchable effects loop, 'Tube Monitor' system, 4x ECC83 and 4x 6L6GC valves. Weight: 22kg (approx).

order code 227053 € 1258.- £ 1049.-

Kemper Profiling Amplifier

Guitar preamp

Allows you to take a precise sound snapshot of an existing amplifier setup including speaker cabinet and microphones, multiple stomp effect emulations (up to 4 simultaneously), master effects, EQ, and more, it is now possible for the first time to take a precise snapshot of your own amplifier sound.

order code 264341 € 1399.- £ 1167.-

Gallien Krueger Backline 115 II

Bass combo

175W, 1x 15" speaker, 4-band EQ, 10dB pad, mute switch, gain & level controls, contour control, line output, headphone output

order code 156650 € 249.- £ 208.-

Ashdown T15-250S

Bass combo

Thomann Special Edition, 1x 15" speaker, 250W, hi/low input. Controls: bass, lo mid, middle, hi mid, treble, deep and bright. FX loop, DI out, tuner out.

order code 227816 € 285.- £ 238.-

Line6 LowDown LD400 Pro

400W bass combo

400W, 2x 10" speaker + horn, 5 amp models, 5 bass effects, 4 programmable channel memories (36 with FBV shortboard), front panel tuner, output for external speaker, balanced XLR DI output, headphone output, 1/8" CD/MP3 input, jack for FBV Express or FBV shortboard, weight: 41kg.

order code 207508 € 288.- £ 240.-

Ampeg BA300/210

300W hybrid bass combo

2x10" speaker, HF horn with level control, 12AX7 preamp tube, 3-band EQ, mid control style, ultra high/low switches, built-in compressor, pre/post switch and ground lift, removable casters, dimensions WHD: 53.98 x 54.61 x 40.64.cm, weight: 25.kg.

order code 206084 € 522.- £ 435.-

Ashdown MAG 300H Bundle

Bass half stack

MAG300H bass head - 300W @ 4Ω, active and passive ins, VU meter. Controls: bass, low mid, mid, hi mid, treble, bright and deep switches. Post EQ balanced DI line/tuner out. Weight: 8.5kg. **MAG410T** bass cab - 4x 10" + tweeter, 350W @ 8Ω, 60Hz-20kHz. Weight: 28kg. Includes speaker cable.

order code 112500 € 569.- £ 475.-

Ampeg BA600/210

600W hybrid bass combo

2x 12AX7 valve preamp, 600W, 2x 10" neodymium speakers, HF horn with level control, channel switching (vintage B15/modern), 3-band EQ, ultra hi/lo switches, integrated compressor, line out, tube-driven balanced XLR and unbalanced 1/4" out with level control, pre/post EQ switch and ground lift, FX loop. Dimensions: 66 x 69 x 43cm. Weight: 27.5kg.

order code 202312 € 619.- £ 516.-

Ampeg BA600/115

600W hybrid bass combo

2x 12AX7 valve preamp, 600W, 1x 15" neodymium speakers, HF horn with level control, channel switching (vintage B15/modern), 3-band EQ, ultra hi/lo switches, compressor, line out, tube-driven bal. XLR and unbal. 1/4" out with level control, pre/post EQ switch and ground lift, FX loop. Weight: 27.5kg.

order code 206085 € 619.- £ 516.-

Gallien Krueger MB150S-112 III

150W bass combo

Input with 10dB pad switch, voicing filters, low boost, EQ, output, limiter, send/return, line out, headphone output, speaker out, 1x12" speaker. Dimensions: 34.8 x 38.1 x 21.60cm. Weight: 11kg.

order code 142875 € 699.- £ 583.-

MB150E-112 III
150W, with chorus.
order code 141301 € 799.- £ 666.-

Line6 LowDown HD400

400W bass head

5 amp models, 5 bass effects, 4 programmable channel memories (36 with FBV shortboard), front panel tuner, 2 speakon outs for external speaker, balanced XLR DI out, 1/4" preamp out, jack for optional FBV Express or Shortboard.

order code 207509 € 189.- £ 158.-

Kustom DE300 HD

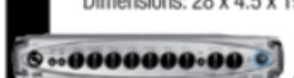
Hybrid bass head

Tube preamp with 12AX7 valve, 300W RMS @ 4Ω, controls for bass, mids and treble, room EQ, organic clipping, preamp out, power amp in, DI output XLR, dimensions WHD: 58,4 x 26,7 x 29,2cm, weight: 16,3kg, designed in USA.

order code 229074 € 259.- £ 216.-

Gallien Krueger MB500

Bass head



500W @ 4Ω, 350W @ 8Ω, active 4-band EQ, separate boost channel with dedicated volume control, contour control, digital power supply and power amp, DI out with pre/post switch and ground lift, 2 Speakon outs, headphone/line out, FX loop, tuner out, mute switch. Dimensions: 28 x 4.5 x 19.5cm. Weight: 1.36kg.

order code 204688 € 499.- £ 416.-

Gallien Krueger 1001RB-II

Bass head

700W @ 4Ω, 460W @ 8Ω LF low & 50W high, 4/5-string preset, contour and presence controls, 4-band EQ, XLR DI out with ground lift and pre/post switch, FX loop, tuner out, mute switch. Dimensions: 19"/2U

order code 146973 € 755.- £ 630.-

Gallien Krueger GT700RB-IV
480W + 75W @ 4Ω.
order code 145612 € 589.- £ 491.-

www.thomann.de
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Sennheiser Freeport Instrument

Diversity UHF wireless system

4 switchable frequencies between 863 - 865MHz, 10mW HF power, diversity receiver with LED for HF, diversity, peak, XLR & jack out, guitar bodypack with 1x 9V battery (up to 10hr). Includes 12V power supply and guitar cable.

order code 183507 € 158.- £ 132.-

Shure PG14E T10

UHF guitar/bass wireless system

PG1 handheld transmitter, 10 frequencies switchable (4 parallel), T10 frequency range (854-865MHz), pilot tone, mic/line switchable, 10mW HF power, 9.5" diversity receiver with internal antennas, audio and ready LEDs on receiver, channel display, XLR/jack out, powered via 9V battery. Includes WA302 guitar cable and power supply.

order code 109421 € 188.- £ 157.-

Line 6 Relay G50

Guitar & bass guitar wireless system

2.4GHz, 12 switchable frequencies, frequency response: 10Hz - 20kHz, 120dB max. SPL, up to 60m working distance, jack I/O, battery powered up to 8h, LED signal for status and battery health, switchable EQ presets to simulate different guitar cables, small and trendy housing, incl. batteries, cable and manual.

o. code 241990 € 399.- £ 333.-

Line 6 Relay G90 19" True Diversity Receiver, 2 outs for amp/tuner.

order code 241999 € 635.- £ 530.-

Sennheiser EW172 G3 / 1G8

1,8GHz wireless system with bodypack

Bodypack, 9,5" receiver, 20 banks with up to 12 compatible frequencies + 1 bank with writeable frequencies, 25Hz - 18kHz, pilot tone, auto tune, HDX-compander, frequency response 1G8 (1785 - 1800MHz), LCD display with with NF and channel, 10mW power, 2 BNC antenna connections, incl. power supply and 2 AA batteries.

order code 264259 € 645.- £ 538.-

Danelectro Qwiktune QT 11

Tuner for guitar and bass

Built-in electronic tuning pipe, plays E, A, D, G, h and e trough built-in speaker, 3 LEDs, built-in microphone, LC-display, powered by batteries (incl. 2x AAA).

order code 142801 € 9.50 £ 7.90

Danelectro Qwiktune QT 12

Chromatic tuner, electronic tuning pipe, 12 reference tones.

order code 147028 € 9.50 £ 7.90

Korg Pitchblack

Chromatic floor pedal tuner

LED display, 100% true bypass out, 4 display modes (full strobe, half strobe, meter & mirror), detection range from E0 to C8 (20,60Hz - 4186Hz), adjustable calibration (436 - 445Hz), 9V DC output jack for cascading the power supply to other pedals, black aluminium die-cast body, optional power supply available.

order code 207261 € 63.- £ 53.-

tc electronic PolyTune mini

Polyphonic stompbox tuner

Reference pitch: 440Hz, tuning range: 27.5Hz - 4186Hz, ±0.5 cent tuning accuracy, true bypass, super-bright LED display, Drop-D and capo tuning, up to 5 semitones flat tunings, dimensions WDH: 5.1 x 9.3 x 4.5cm, weight: 160g.

o. code 274540 € 77.- £ 64.-

Boss TU-3

Chromatic floor tuner

Cent mode (like classical tuner) or stream mode, Accu Pitch, high brightness mode, flat tunings, mute or bypass, C0 (16,35Hz) - C8 (4.186Hz), also for 7-string guitars and 6-string basses, ±1 Cent, calibration 436 - 445 Hz, powered by 9V battery (included) or optional power supply, power for up to 7 additional FX pedals. Dimensions: 7.3 x 5.9 x 12.9cm. Weight: 390g.

order code 238909 € 88.- £ 73.-

Harley Benton PowerPlant Junior

Compact multi power supply unit

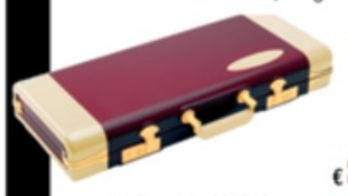
Power supply for FX pedals, 5x isolated 9V DC outputs delivering 120mA each, incl. cable set (5x 60cm, 5x 30cm, 1x Y, 1x daisy chain 100cm).

order code 264101 € 28.- £ 23.-

Danelectro Pedalboard

Pedalboard

Original case for 5 Danelectro Cool Cat effects, incl. power supply and all cables, dimensions WDH: 52.5 x 22 x 8cm, weight: 2.2kg.



order code 209216 € 38.- £ 32.-

Behringer FCB1010

MIDI foot controller with MIDI merge

10 banks with 10 presets each, special presets for Behringer amps, 2 expression pedals, simultaneous transmission of 5 MIDI program changes and 2 MIDI controllers per preset, MIDI note-on commands for trigger & tap tempo applications, 2 program relay control switch jack outputs (e.g. to select channels on any guitar amp), built-in power supply. Weight: 3.5kg

order code 149820 € 109.- £ 91.-

Harley Benton PB1000

Pedal board

For floor effects with aluminum case, velcro mounting area, incl. velcro tape and mounting material for optional power supply under the board, metal handle, chrome corners, dimensions: 60 x 40 x 11cm, weight (without case): 4,6kg.

order code 258092 € 122.- £ 102.-

tc electronic Flashback

Delay/looper stompbox

Mono/stereo I/O, delay, feedback and FX-level control, 10 different delay settings, audio tapping, USB connection for exchanging TonePrint settings and software updates, true bypass, power supply or battery (both not included).

order code 259463 € 145.- £ 121.-

Boss ME-25 Bundle

Guitar FX pedal

24bit, 60 presets, OD/DS solo function, easy edit function, 5 real time controller, ME-25 DVD-ROM, to use with included 6 AA batteries or optional power supply, weight: 1,9kg, dimensions WDH: 30 x 19,1 x 7,2cm. **Bundle incl. the sssnake GKP6 cable.**

order code 253474 € 158.- £ 132.-

Voodoo Lab Pedal Power 2 Plus

Universal power supply

For all battery operated guitar pedals, 4x 9/12V/100mA, 2x 9V/250mA, 2x 9V/100mA or combination of several outputs for 18V or 24V, each output is complete isolated & short circuit protected, regulated and highly filtered, incl. cables and detachable AC power cable.

order code 205981 € 159.- £ 133.-

Boss DD-7

Digital delay

6.4sec delay time, 40sec loop function, modulation echo with chorus, modeling of the classic DM-2, tap tempo via optional footswitch or continuous adjustment via optional expression pedal, stereo in/out, power supply optional.

order code 207482 € 168.- £ 140.-

Zoom G3

FX unit & guitar audio interface

3 big LCD displays and footswitches, authentic modeling for amps, cabinets and microphones, more than 100 DSP effects, up to 100 presets, drum computer, tuner, looper function with 40 sec. phrase recording and overdubbing, USB audio interface (USB powered and compliant to Mac and PC), incl. edit & share, Sequel LE and power supply.

order code 263002 € 169.- £ 141.-

Boss RC-3

Loop station

Massive internal memory with up to three hours of stereo recording time, 99 on-board memories for storing loops, USB 2.0 port allows you to connect to a PC and import/export WAV audio, rhythm guide with real drums, runs on a single 9V battery (included) or optional AC power supply (order code 108096).

order code 259315 € 198.- £ 165.-

Digitech JamMan Stereo

Looper / phrase sampler

Store over 35 minutes of mono, CD quality loops in 99 internal memories, SD card slot, 44.1kHz sample rate, USB port, record rhythm loops and solo over them on the fly, completely hands-free, aux in, reverse playback, 4 heavy-duty metal footswitches, 3 stop modes, balanced XLR mic in, metronome, automatic recording, includes power supply.

o. code 243160 € 244.- £ 204.-

Vox ToneLab EX

Guitar preamp

Original Vox ValveReactor™ with 12AX7 valve, 200 professional created programs, 100 user programs, 100 factory presets, incl. 50 song presets, 33 amp models, 11 cabinet models, 45 premium effects, 11 distortion pedals, 15 floorpedal effects, 11 modulation effects, 4 delay effect types, 3 reverb types, 1 noise reduction, dimensions: WHD: 39,4 x 23,8 x 7,2cm, weight: 3kg, incl. power supply.

order code 257611 € 266.- £ 222.-

Boss ME-70

Multi FX pedal & preamp

Manual mode, memory mode, 18 banks of 4 patches, preamp with 6 amp models, 4 effect groups with on/off footswitch, 40sec looper, expression pedal with 6 functions, reverb, noise supressor, tuner, aux in, powered via battery or optional 9V power supply.

order code 222795 € 277.- £ 231.-

Boss RC-30 PowerSet

Dual track looper

Twin pedal multitrack looper with true stereo I/O, 2 synchronized stereo tracks, massive internal memory with up to three hours of stereo recording time, 99 on-board memory phrases for storing loops, built-in effects for processing loops, USB 2.0, rhythm guide with real drums, runs on batteries or optional AC power supply. **Bundle incl. Boss (Roland) PSA 230S power supply.**

order code 259329 € 318.- £ 265.-

Boss JS-8 eBand

Audio interface, preamp und recorder

39 amp models for guitar and bass, audio player with 4000 songs, mic input with 4 modeling effects, 300 audio loop phrases on-board for backing tracks and rhythms, 40 sec. looper with overdubs, 24bit/44,1kHz, incl. power supply, SD card, dimensions WDH: 26,4 x 16,6 x 20,1cm, weight: 1,7kg.

order code 235701 € 318.- £ 265.-

Boss GT-10 bundle

Guitar FX processor and preamp

400 presets (200 factory, 200 user), 13 simultaneous FX blocks, 2 WSP chips, SB Audio MIDI interface, 2 freely assignable control footswitches, amp switch connector, FX loop, Boss 40sec looper. Dimensions: 54.2 x 27.2 x 7.7cm (WxDxH). Weight: 4.7kg. **Bundle includes Thomann FX pedal bag.**

order code 210357 € 388.- £ 324.-

Boss RC-300

Loop station

3 stereo tracks each with 2 separate foot switches, volume fader for each track, expression pedal for effect control in real time, 3 hours stereo recording time and 99 internal user presets, 16 optimized effects, XLR mic in with phantom power, USB connection for import & export of WAV data files, dimensions WxDxH: 53.6 x 23.1 x 7.6cm, weight: 3.9kg, incl. power supply.

order code 270951 € 468.- £ 390.-

Line6 POD HD500 Bundle

Guitar FX

16 amp, 16 cabinet and 100 effect models, 48sec. looper, pitch shifter, effects pre/post switchable, effect loop, aux in, XLR mic in, CD/MP3 in, Variax and USB (10 audio channels), headphone out, 128 user programs and 512 factory presets, MIDI in/out/thru, dimensions WHD: 55 x 8 x 27cm. **Bundle incl. Thomann gigbag.**

order code 254915 € 489.- £ 408.-

Roland GR-55GK

Guitar synth + modeling

910 editable Roland synthesizer sounds, complete modeling-soundchain (guitar/bass/synth/effects/amps) out of VG-99 incl. virtual tuning, 2 synth sounds and the modeling sound can be combined, 270 preset sounds, 297 storage spaces, 20-second looper with endless overdubbing, USB interface for audio and MIDI, incl. power supply, GK-3 pickup and 5m GK cable, weight: 3.3kg.

order code 259311 € 745.- £ 621.-

Avid Eleven Rack + Pro Tools 10

Guitar recording and effect system

True-Z auto-impedance guitar input, classic amp and stompbox sounds, effects processors in studio-quality, convolution based microphone emulations, integrated FX-loop, Tuner, tempo tap, USB 2.0, supports up to 8 simultaneous channels of high-resolution recording (up to 24bit/96kHz), AES/EBU and S/PDIF digital I/O, MIDI I/O, incl. ProTools 10 (download version) and iLok.

order code 272823 € 744.- £ 621.-

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149398 Medium
149399 Heavy
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Harley Benton
Professional perfoid picks
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with double-sided tape
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for head stock, can be clipped between 2 strings, for 2 picks
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the sssnake cables

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128550	IPP1060, 6m	£ 2.79
157995	GPK3, 3m	£ 4.00
157996	GPK6, 6m	£ 5.50
158874	GPK9, 9m	£ 7.20
166775	textile coated cable, 6m	£ 6.30
163864	WPP1060, 4m, helix cable	£ 5.50

Cordial cables

104967	Cordial CTI3PP, 3m	£ 8.80
104968	Cordial CTI6PP, 6m	£ 10.80
104969	Cordial CTI9PP, 9m	£ 12.80

Harley Benton GTI
Electronic tuning tone, with a push of a button all 6 guitar notes (E, A, D, G, H, E) via built-in speaker, practical key ring format
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Thomann CTK-10
Chromatic tuner as keyring, tuning by built-in microphone, pitch range: 440 Hz, detection accuracy: +-0,5 cent, incl. battery
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Thomann power supply
9V DC, 300mA, for Ibanez, Boss or Behringer floor effects.
order code 108096 £ 7.90

Pickups

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180924	Seymour Duncan SSH-JB	£ 104.-
242760	Seymour Duncan SAPH-2S	£ 154.-
121456	EMG 81 BK	£ 60.-
152101	EMG 85 BK	£ 64.-
136665	EMG 60 BK	£ 60.-
154102	EMG Zakk Wylde Pro	£ 120.-
146139	EMG DG-20 David Gilmour	£ 229.-
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HB-H by Shadow
Open coil humbucker, vintage sound, for bridge position, individual pole pieces for high definition
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High-quality replacement tubes for all kinds of amplifiers or combos

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133444	12AX7 WA	£ 7.90
133445	12AX7 EH	£ 9.70

Jim Dunlop Bottlenecks

101824	202, Regular wall, medium	£ 3.21
101827	215, Heavy wall, medium	£ 4.75
125351	213, Heavy wall, large	£ 4.75

Shubb Capodaster
The capo that most professionals use, perfect solution for all guitar players.

121652	C1 for electric and acoustic	£ 12.40
122079	C2 for nylon guitar	£ 12.80
103239	C3 for 12-string western	£ 12.80
128426	C4 for round fretboards	£ 12.40

G7TH Capodaster
Acoustic/Electric capo for 6-string steel string acoustic guitar, electric guitar or electric bass, no trimming, curved
order code 183490 £ 23.-

Maxell 9V battery
9V alkaline block, cadmium free
order code 132579 £ 2.00

Fischer Amps rechargeable batteries

166405	9V NiMH, 210mAh	£ 7.90
156626	9V NiMH, 270mAh	£ 11.20
132764	1,5V NiMH / AA, 2200mAh	£ 3.14

ALVAREZ
AP70 & AG75CE

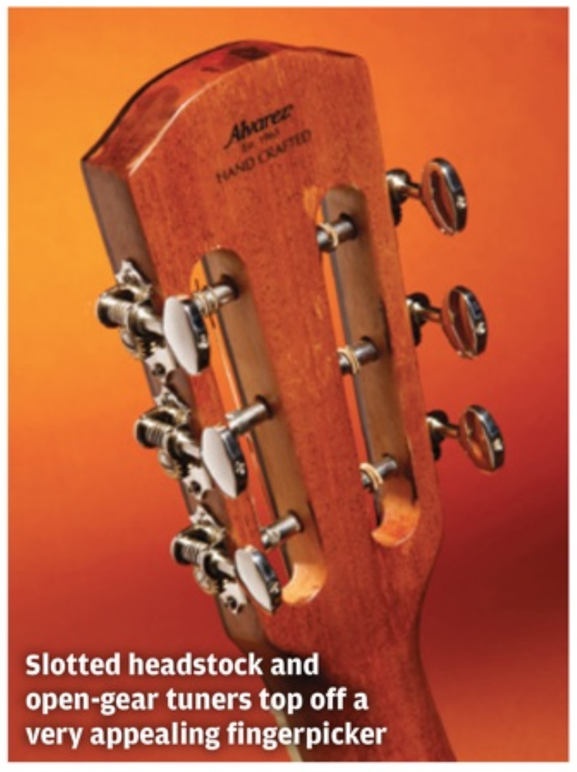
The Alvarez Artist Series covers everything from parlours to dreadnoughts; we take a look at one made for the sofa and one built for the stage. Review by **Martin Wheeler**

Established for over 45 years, Alvarez Guitars was originally formed when St Louis Music teamed up with respected Japanese luthier Kazuo Yairi to produce a range of affordable quality instruments. The top-end instruments retained the Alvarez-Yairi name but the quality seeped down to the budget end of the line... a feature which has remained to this day. We're looking at two guitars from the Artist Series – a svelte parlour and a buxom grand auditorium cutaway.

AP70

The first impression is one of tasteful restraint, with none of the bling that some builders slap on to cover a restricted budget. The 12th fret neck join, slotted headstock and tightly waisted parlour shape ooze an evocative sense of sitting on the porch sipping a few cold ones and banishing the plectrum to the dust. The top is tightly-grained sitka spruce, the back and sides rosewood, all finished in a thin high-gloss polyurethane. A satin-finished mahogany neck is topped with a bound rosewood fingerboard; the board is neatly fretted with the ends extending out over the edge of the binding, while the rosewood theme extends to the face of the glossy slotted headstock. Off-white binding and a tasteful sprinkle of abalone and pearl around the soundhole all add to the aesthetic, and with no regular position markers the simple side dot markers are a sensible and very visible black.

Laminated rosewood back and sides and a dovetail-joint mahogany neck



Slotted headstock and open-gear tuners top off a very appealing fingerpicker

The Alvarez Bi-Level bridge is designed to increase downward pressure over the compensated bone saddle – at the expense of a little mass in the bridge itself. It jars a little with the traditional look, but in engineering terms it works very well. Alvarez claim that it increases string vibration across the soundboard, allows any slight inconsistency in soundboard shape and neck angle to be less noticeable, and negates the need for notching the bridge to allow decent string break angle. The nut is also solid bone, and the diecast open gear tuners look the part and work fine. ➔

The AP70 parlour is a very fresh and inviting-sounding guitar with a tightly focussed sound that has real charm

FINAL SCORE

ALVAREZ AP70	
Build Quality	**18**/20
Playability	**18**/20
Sound	**17**/20
Value for money	**18**/20
Vibe	**18**/20
TOTAL	**89%**

FACTFILE
AP70

DESCRIPTION **Parlour-size steel-string acoustic. Made in China**
PRICE **£335**

BUILD **Solid sitka spruce top, rosewood back and sides with 18-fret bound rosewood fingerboard. Rosewood Bi-Level bridge, bone nut and saddle, chrome open gear tuners and twin strap buttons**

OPTIONS **None**
LEFT-HANDERS **Special order**
FINISH **Polyurethane gloss body with satin neck**

SCALE LENGTH
614mm/24.2"
NECK WIDTH
Nut 45.52mm
12th fret 55.7mm
DEPTH OF NECK
First fret 22.65mm
Ninth fret 26.3mm
STRING SPACING
Nut 37mm
Bridge 53.5mm
WEIGHT **1.7kg/3.75lb**

CONTACT **Go To Guitars Ltd**
01925 444696
www.gotoguitars.com

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TW73
Cedar top and solid mahogany parlour with bone saddle and nut
RRP **£559**

Faith
Mercury Parlour
Engelmann spruce and mahogany with Graphtec NuBone nut and saddle
RRP **£539**

FACTFILE
AG75CE

DESCRIPTION **Grand auditorium-sized steel-string electro-acoustic with cutaway. Made in China**
PRICE **£445**

BUILD **Solid cedar top, rosewood back and sides with 20-fret bound rosewood fingerboard. Rosewood Bi-Level bridge, bone nut and saddle, SY650 B-Band designed pickup, chrome enclosed tuners, twin strap buttons**

OPTIONS **AD70CE dread**
LEFT-HANDERS **No**
FINISH **Polyurethane gloss body with satin neck**

SCALE LENGTH
650mm/25.6"
NECK WIDTH
Nut 43.3mm
12th fret 53.3mm
DEPTH OF NECK
First fret 21mm
Ninth fret 23mm
STRING SPACING
Nut 34.5mm
Bridge 53mm
WEIGHT **2kg /4.4lb**

CONTACT **Go To Guitars Ltd**
01925 444696
www.gotoguitars.com

Like this? Try this...

Simon & Patrick
CW Gloss Top (GT) Mini-Jumbo Cedar
Plain but tasty cutaway model in cedar and red wild cherry with a B-Band A3T pickup system
RRP **£685**

Taylor
214E
Sitka and sapele non-cutaway guitar with ebony fingerboard and Taylor's ES Blue pickup
RRP **£749**

Ozark
3770
Solid spruce and solid mahogany cutaway grand auditorium with an Artec four-band preamp system
RRP **£375**

The preamp mixes signals from and undersaddle transducer and an internal bug

The Bi-Level bridge drops the pin height to increase pressure on the saddle

With great build quality, fine tones and a versatile pickup system the AG75CE is a lot of electro-acoustic for your money

A deft peek inside with a mirror reveals clean glue lines and hand-shaped scalloped braces. Like the exterior, it's almost impeccable inside.

Sounds

The shorter scale and wider neck at the nut should appeal to fingerstyle players, and the extra space and string-to-string spacing at the nut allows some room to spread your wings and roam. The tones are clear and strong with great note separation and warmth; this is a very fresh and inviting-sounding guitar. Introduce a pick and bashing a few chords reveals limitations in the volume and projection from the looser string tension and short scale, but the tightly focussed chime still has real charm.

AG75CE

The grand auditorium flatters to be a bigger guitar than it actually is – essentially a dreadnought with a gastric band, the slimmer torso shape is designed to enhance trebles but retain an even bass without the boominess often associated with larger-bodied jumbos. The shape is pleasing, and a neat twist on the standard shape.

The spec is similar to the AP70's, including the Bi-Level bridge, but this one has a solid cedar top instead of spruce. The rosewood back and sides are held together with similarly hand-sanded scalloped bracing and it utilises a slinky satin-finished mahogany neck and bound rosewood fingerboard. This time the scale length is full-sized, and the solid headstock carries closed back 'Grover-alike' tuners. The build quality inside and out is also top notch for this price bracket.

Sounds

Acoustically the narrow waist and cutaway lend a slightly brighter and more focussed tone than a typical dreadnought. The mids are well controlled, and there's a warmth that suggests time and plenty of playing will only improve and sweeten the basic acoustic tone.

The 'designed by B-Band' SY650 preamp system uses B-Band's patented electret-film technology (essentially a flexible undersaddle pickup) in conjunction with a transducer under the soundboard. The string balance is even and the output is bright and lively. The LCD backlit chromatic tuner is accurate and the three-band EQ does what you'd expect, but the cherry is the Blend slider switch which allows you to isolate either pickup or mix between the two outputs and add some warmth to the spikiness of the undersaddle unit. There's even a DI output on the jack panel for increased versatility in a live set-up.

Verdict

The entire Artist Series range of Alvarez guitars aim to combine high level production values and great tones at affordable prices. By using good materials and solid construction, we'd say they've achieved their goal. The AP70 is a charming little thing – a great have-at-home strummer/fingerpicking guitar and a fine composer's tool with a character-packed voice that will find a home in many a studio or living room. The AG75CE aims at a broader audience, and squarely hits its mark. It's worth a serious look if perhaps you're just a little jaded by the standard dreadnought shape alone, but with great build quality, fine acoustic tones and a very versatile pickup system (retrofitting a similar system to an existing acoustic would cost in excess of £200 alone) then you'll be getting a whole lot of good-looking electro-acoustic for your money.

FINAL SCORE

ALVAREZ AG75CE	
Build Quality	**18**/20
Playability	**18**/20
Sound	**18**/20
Value for money	**19**/20
Vibe	**17**/20
TOTAL	**90%**

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SIGMA
000M-18 & DM-18

The Sigma brand is no longer Martin's budget line but a fully independent company with a production facility in China. The looks are undeniably familiar, but can we say the same about the sound? Review by **Will Nicholas**

FACTFILE
000M-18

DESCRIPTION **Non-cutaway 000-sized acoustic guitar. Made in China**
PRICE **£312**

BUILD **Solid sitka spruce with laminated mahogany body and three-piece mahogany neck, 20-fret set mahogany neck, rosewood fingerboard and bridge, bone nut and saddle, Grover machineheads**

ELECTRICS **None**
LEFT-HANDERS **No**
FINISH **Natural gloss body, satin neck**

SCALE LENGTH
645mm/25.5"
NECK WIDTH
Nut 42mm
12th fret 53mm
DEPTH OF NECK
First fret 18mm
Ninth fret 22mm
STRING SPACING
Nut 35mm
Bridge 55mm
ACTION AS SUPPLIED
12th fret treble 2mm
12th fret bass 2.5mm
WEIGHT **1.9kg/4.18lbs**

CONTACT **Westside**
0141 248 4812
www.sigmaguitars.com

First impressions of these non-Martin, Chinese-built Sigmas are good. The grain on the solid sitka spruce tops is tight and straight, with no nasty blemishes or flecks. Both guitars have attractive rosewood fingerboards topped with pearly white dots. Although the boards aren't bound, the fret slots are well disguised and the frets are immaculately dressed. The laminated mahogany backs and sides have no fancy figuring, but the grain looks gorgeous under the flawless gloss finish and the bookmatching on the back is well-executed, with plain black strips running along the centre joints.

The body binding is black too, with extra black and white layers for the purfling and rosette. Rosewood headstock overlays match the traditional belly bridges, and proper bone is used for saddles and nuts. Although old-school in appearance, the black pickguards and kidney Grover tuners give both of these guitars a '70s sort of look. Still, those tuners certainly keep things stable.

With their shallow C profiles the two necks are virtually indistinguishable. The headstocks are scarfe-jointed and the heels are stacked, but Sigma's Chinese factory is using a traditional mortise and tenon neck joint. The neck finish is also satin rather than gloss, giving a comfortably played-in feel.

The back and sides are laminated, but the top is solid sitka spruce

Fat-buttoned Grovers give the 000M-18 the whiff of 1970s Martins

Though a little crashy and strained, the 000M-18 proves effective for general folk and blues fingerpicking duties

000M-18

It's no wonder that 000-style guitars are so popular with fingerstylists. This one sits perfectly in the lap and your hands fall straight into the correct position. The chunky tuners do make things a tad neck-heavy, though.

FINAL SCORE

SIGMA 000M-18	
Build Quality	**18**/20
Playability	**19**/20
Sound	**15**/20
Value for money	**15**/20
Vibe	**17**/20
TOTAL	**84%**

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AC3000-NT
Stylish Artwood series OM, Engelmann top, rosewood binding, solid mahogany back/sides, gold Grovers. With gigbag and strap
RRP **£332**

Seagull
Coastline Cedar Folk
Solid cedar top, wild cherry back/sides, silverleaf maple neck, rosewood fretboard. With gigbag
RRP **£346**

FACTFILE
DM-18

DESCRIPTION **Non-cutaway dreadnought-sized acoustic guitar. Made in China**
PRICE **£312**

BUILD **Solid sitka spruce with laminated mahogany body and three-piece mahogany neck, 20-fret set mahogany neck, rosewood fingerboard/bridge, bone nut/saddle, Grover tuners**

ELECTRICS **None**
LEFT-HANDERS **No**
FINISH **Natural gloss body, satin neck**

SCALE LENGTH
645mm/25.5"
NECK WIDTH
Nut 42mm
12th fret 53mm
DEPTH OF NECK
First fret 18mm
Ninth fret 22mm
STRING SPACING
Nut 35mm
Bridge 55mm
ACTION AS SUPPLIED
12th fret treble 2mm
12th fret bass 2.5mm
WEIGHT **2kg/4.4lbs**

CONTACT **Westside Distribution**
0141 248 4812
www.sigmaguitars.com

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D-18 type dread in sitka spruce and solid mahogany, V profile neck with V profile, abalone torch headstock inlay, Fishman pickup system
RRP **£357**

The satin-finish necks are glued to the bodies with an old-style mortise and tenon joint

A proper compensated bone nut is a boon on a guitar of this price

The smoother-sounding Sigma DM-18 responds willingly to bluegrass runs and Neil Young-style rhythm parts

The sound of the OOOM-18 is all about shimmery and ethereal trebles with impressive string-to-string balance and solid lows. The bass end isn't especially deep, but it's certainly commensurate with what we'd expect from a brand new OOO-style guitar. That solid top is also responsive, and things get loud with relatively little effort.

Although it's fun for rhythm duties, the OOOM-18 does become a little crashy and strained when you play it hard, and there's insufficient bass depth to bolster and sweeten the tone. We also found that Celtic meanderings in open tunings sounded a bit two-dimensional and lacking in the tonal complexity and depth the style requires.

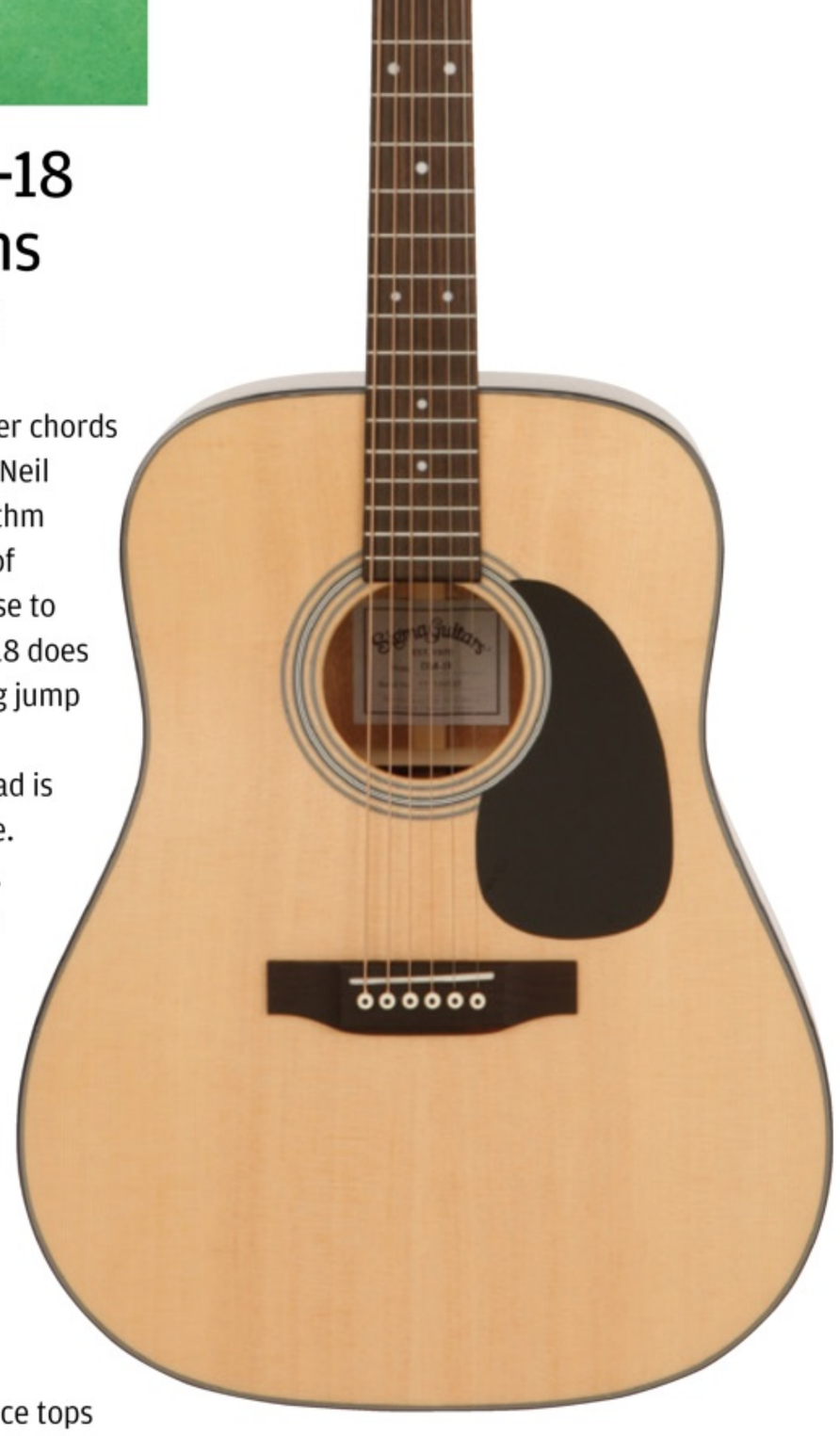
The OOOM-18 proved effective for general folk and blues fingerpicking duties due to its clear and crisp response. We also enjoyed its slightly raw and percussive edge for Travis picking, and we think this guitar could potentially be set up for some convincing bottleneck tones.

DM-18

Even if you find dreadnoughts a bit of an armful, the extra real estate provided by the body shape goes a long way to smoothing out some of the DM-18's brasher qualities. As you might expect the bass is fuller, but it stops short of boominess. Best of all the string to string balance is more even, so it's just as good a picker as it is a strummer.

When wielding a pick, the DM-18 responds willingly to strong (right) arm tactics. The bass end leaps into life with oodles of chesty thump and plenty of snap if you need it. The bass notes of bluegrass runs sail crisply over chords with tautness and focus, and Neil Young-style palm-muted rhythm parts sound punchy and full of intent. Strum more softly close to the fingerboard and the DM-18 does a pretty good job for comping jump blues and western swing.

Like the OOOM-18, the dread is not lacking in treble response. Rather than sounding clangy, however, the treble provides a welcome injection of shimmer and chime that combines with the scooped midrange to provide a classic dreadnought tone. If you want 'boom chugga' rhythms, the DM-18 can certainly deliver.



Verdict

These new Sigmas' solid spruce tops make their presence felt through their dynamic responsiveness and harmonic content. Like many brand new spruce-topped acoustics they sound slightly too bright and crashy in the top end, especially when they're played hard, but we'd expect the response to mellow out as they become properly played in, and there was some sweetening during the period we had them in for review.

If you're familiar with all-solid wood acoustics you may detect a slight lack of woody character and depth of tone, and single notes also sound a bit lean and lacking in substance. It's true that you can find similar acoustics in this price range with solid timber backs and sides, but that's not necessarily a guarantee of superior tone... so much depends on the way a guitar is built and braced. We can only report on the guitars we have seen, but it would be hard to find any acoustic easier to play than these two. The setup is spot on and intonation is equally impressive. Overall we're mightily impressed with the build, playability and tone quality.

FINAL SCORE

SIGMA DM-18 DREADNOUGHT	
Build Quality	**18**/20
Playability	**19**/20
Sound	**16**/20
Value for money	**15**/20
Vibe	**17**/20
TOTAL	**85%**

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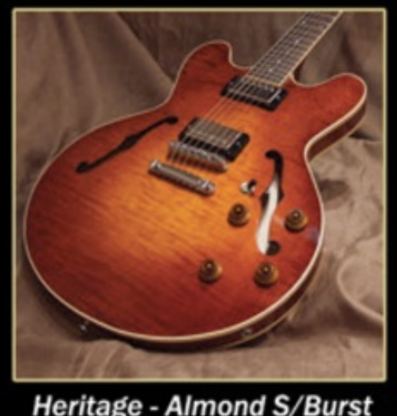

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Electromatic Junior Jet Bass II

If you need classic rock grind or ’60s plumminess then the new Junior Jet basses now come with an extra fret, cool metal knobs and a vintage-style headstock. Review by **Gareth Morgan**

FACTFILE

Electromatic Junior Jet Bass II

DESCRIPTION **Solidbody bass. Made in China**
PRICE **£286.80**

BUILD **Basswood body, maple neck with 20 medium jumbo frets on a rosewood fingerboard. Deluxe enclosed diecast tuners and standard four-saddle bridge. Chrome hardware**
ELECTRICS **Passive with two Gretsch mini humbucking pickups, one Volume and one Tone control, three-way pickup selector switch**
LEFT HANDER **No**
FINISHES **Black, tobacco sunburst**
RANGE OPTIONS **Junior Jet Bass (single pickup) £238.80**

SCALE LENGTH **770mm/30.3"**
WIDTH OF NECK
Nut 40mm
12th fret 52mm
DEPTH OF NECK
First fret 20mm
12th fret 23mm
STRING SPACING
Nut 11mm
Bridge 19.5mm
ACTION AS SUPPLIED
12th fret treble 2.0mm
12th fret bass 2.0mm
WEIGHT **4.02kg/8.86lbs**

CONTACT **Fender GB&I**
01342 331700
www.fender.com

The Gretsch Company has been in existence since 1883. Set up by Friedrich Gretsch ostensibly to make banjos, tambourines and drums, they didn’t start making guitars until the 1930s, by which time his son Fred was at the helm. In the ’50s and ’60s the guitars became popular, thanks mainly to the endorsement of legendary guitarist Chet Atkins and the patronage of players like the Beatles’ George Harrison and Brian Jones of the Rolling Stones. After going out of business in 1981, the company was revived in 1989 by a third-generation Fred Gretsch, who handed production, marketing and distribution over to Fender in 2002. On the bass side, this has resulted in a decent roster of instruments, the latest addition being the Junior Jet Bass II, part of the Electromatic series.

So, what have we got here? Well, Gretsch’s JJB II is a short scale (30.3") bass, made in China and priced firmly in budget territory. Ergonomically speaking it’s designed very much along the lines of Gibson’s Les Paul. Beneath the neatly applied black finish is a basswood body with no comfort-inducing chamfers, just neat bevelling of all edges. At 45mm deep the JJB feels a little chunky, and, given its slightly down-sized proportions, the weight of 4kg/8.8lbs is a bit heavier than you’d expect. There’s a black Gretsch-branded teardrop pickguard, and around the back is an electronics housing plate.

The hump-top Gretsch headstock is a classic, and it looks great on a bass

If a neck pickup is all you need, then the single-pickup G2214 will save you £48

The short-scale Junior Jet II bass has a basswood body and a bolt-on maple neck, and it’s priced in budget territory

Many older Gretsch guitars had a set neck, but the JJB’s deep-profile maple neck is secured via four bolts through an old school chrome neckplate. It’s a comfortable, playable profile, although if you’re more used to the standard 34", the short scale makes it feel cramped and toy-like (Kala U-Bass, anyone?) and can take a little getting used to. Obviously, it’s a boon for those of tender years or smaller stature, and guitarists looking to double on bass generally enjoy the relative familiarity. When Fender became involved, one ➔

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Epiphone
Les Paul Special Bass
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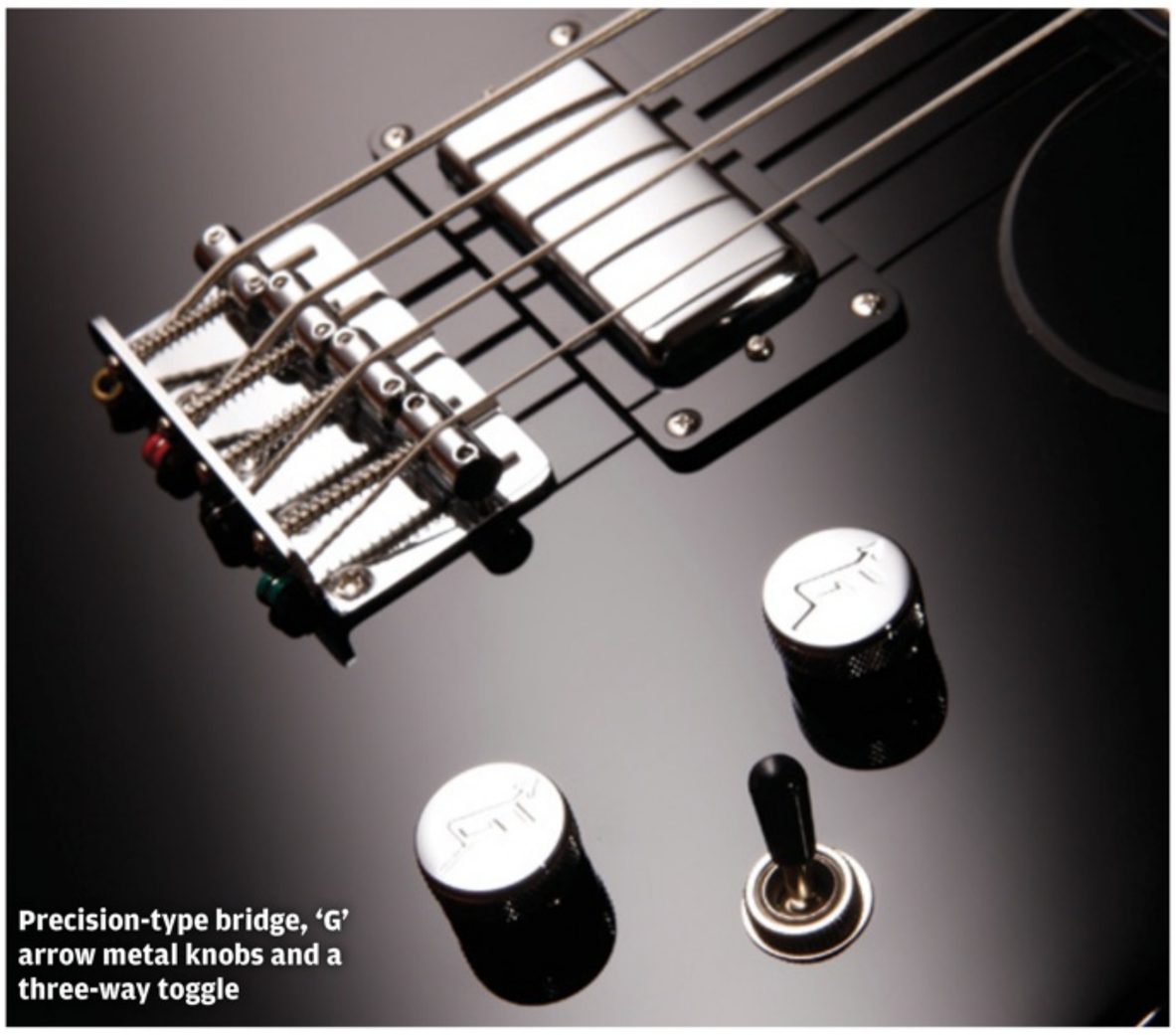
Squier
Vintage Modified Precision Bass
A budget take on another classic, the Squier Vintage Modified Precision Bass is a snip at the price
RRP **£327**

of the modifications they instigated was in the headstock department, making them more vintage-correct. The JJB's headstock is a sleek, slightly concave oblong with a hint of classic detail at the furthest edge. The tuners comprise a set of chrome deluxe enclosed die-cast units. The nut is 'synthetic bone' and the fingerboard itself is rosewood, fitted with 20 well-seated, medium jumbo nickel frets, plus standard dot inlays and a further smaller set of white dots along the top edge.

The JJB is passive and comes kitted out with a pair of Gretsch mini bass humbucking pickups, chrome soapbars in a black plastic surround, one at the bridge and one towards the neck. Controls are one volume and one tone, described as 'G' arrow knobs because they bear a simple logo. The top half of each is knurled chrome while the bottom half is a smooth gunmetal – a rather groovy detail. A simple three-way toggle takes care of pickup selection, and completing the hardware set is a chrome four-saddle bridge – in essence very much like the Fender model, with Philips intonation screws and Allen key grubscrews for height adjustment.


Precision-type bridge, 'G' arrow metal knobs and a three-way toggle

The short scale and small size makes it good for younger players or those looking for a home recording bass

Sounds

Strapping on the Gretsch and plugging in is quite a pleasant experience: the 4kg payload is stable around your neck, and the basic sound you get from the two mini humbuckers is pretty decent. Of course, it's a budget passive bass, so we ain't talking massive tonal variation with seismic lows and spikey highs... but there's a fair amount of bottom end, enough for decent impact, and this is abetted by a pleasing growl from the E string. The midrange is solid as opposed to punchy and the highs speak freely, but they have that slightly compressed feel you find on classic passive Fender Precisions. Though the Gretsch does have a certain amount of edge to it, the emphasis is on practical fundamentals – this could easily become the axe of choice for grungy popsters or even something more along classic rock lines.

In terms of variations, cutting the tone control fully back gives a washy, thuddy sound with little or no practical use, but there are a couple of points prior to reaching this position where you'll get a general softening with diminished growl and smoothed-out rough edges, but the note still has some discernible shape. You may want to venture here for a blues or blues/rock or even some old school Stax soul.

The neck pickup is earthier with about the same level of bottom end, although there's a reduction in both growl and body in the midrange: it doesn't have the same solidity as twin mode. It's a less detailed sound, especially on the thinner strings, almost as if someone's taken a sheet of medium-grade sandpaper to their shining edge. It's still a decent variation, with an even tone, albeit a slightly less interesting nature, and plenty of intent from the E and A strings. Again, what you get from backing off the tone control is a further mild re-focusing on the bassier elements which, as before, yields a softer edge to the sound.

Checking out the bridge pickup, the output level here – and indeed on each selector switch setting – is nicely even, giving you the live practical option to change your sound mid-song by a flick of the switch. The bridge pickup sound itself is the regulation crisp, burpy tone with decent bottom end and just enough nasal edge for funky clarity. Because of the high-mid emphasis, chopping tone to minimum is still an option, albeit a limited one. Less radical reductions actually improve the practicality of this setting by re-balancing the sound – you still get a snappy attack but with more body behind it.

Verdict

It's never going to set the world alight but the Junior Jet Bass II is a solid instrument with a decent array of practical sounds, and the short scale and reduced proportions will appeal to the younger in years, the smaller in stature, guitarists looking to double up on bass, or for a dependable home recording instrument. Its one downside is the slightly excessive weight, but balance is decent, it's easy to play and the reasonable price makes for an appealing package if you're looking to do some serious rocking out.

Alas, no set neck for the budget Electromatic. Neck is maple, body is basswood

FINAL SCORE

ELECTROMATIC JUNIOR JET BASS II	
Build Quality	**18**/20
Playability	**17**/20
Sound	**16**/20
Value for money	**16**/20
Vibe	**16**/20
TOTAL	**83%**

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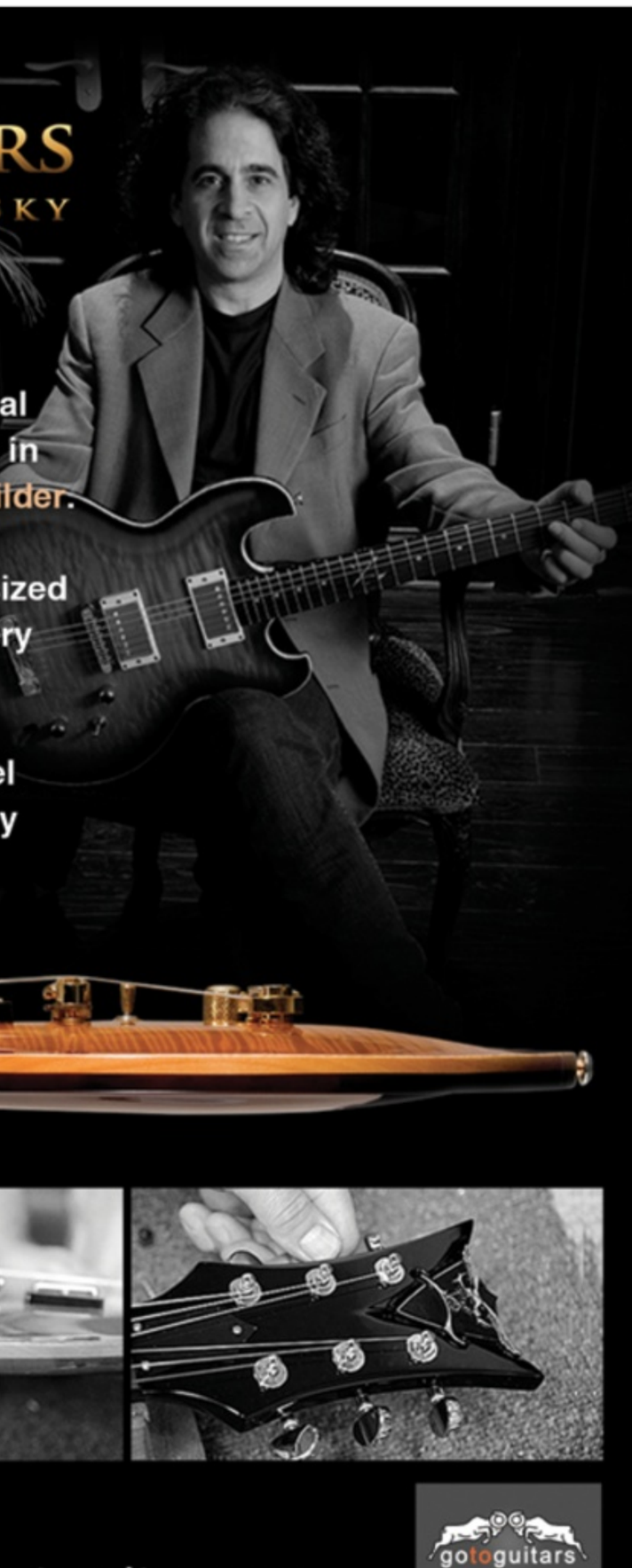

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PHIL JONES BASS
D-600 Amplifier

The PJB D-200 was a sweet unit, but these days players want mega-oomph in a lunchbox size. Behold: the new twin-channel 600W D-600. Review by **Gareth Morgan**

Here at *Guitar & Bass* magazine we've long been fans of the Phil Jones Bass (PJB) gear, ranging from high spec'd and highly musical amplifiers, to cabinets with the superhuman 5" drivers, and of course the combos. It was with much anticipation, then, that we looked forward to the swanky new D-600 amplifier landing in our inbox.

Other than the lack of channel-switching this is a top-notch amp – lightweight, with an excellent sound and good EQ

The D-600 is a Chinese-made 600W digital (Class D) amplifier presented in a small aluminium box weighing 3.05kg/6.75lbs. Sitting on four small rubber feet, it measures 304mm wide, 80mm high and 243mm deep, and the main body of the unit is a featureless expanse of black.

The silver/grey machined aluminium control panel looks simple and purposeful. This is a twin channel amp, with two lines of six controls on the left located in sections marked Input A and B. Each strip contains an input jack socket, an Input Gain switch with High, Low, Mute settings and clip/mute LED, Input Level (gain) control and a five-band EQ. Here you get Lo-Bass (50Hz), Hi-Bass (160Hz), Mid (630Hz), Lo-Treble (2.5kHz) and Hi-Treble (12kHz) and there's cut or boost of 18dB on offer from each. As well as a master volume, the panel also houses PJB's optical compressor/limiter with on/off switch and threshold level control, Aux in jack socket with level control, and Headphone and Line In jack sockets. The usual suspects occupy the rear panel: FX loop, Tuner and Pre Amp Out jack sockets, twin External Speaker Speakon sockets and a balanced XLR DI Out.

Sounds

We reviewed the D-600 using a PJB 6B cabinet loaded with six 5" neodymium drivers. The basic, flat EQ sound is well-balanced with a clarity that's unhindered by tonal bias and plenty of width on display – this is a high-quality reproduction of the fundamental sound of your bass.

If you crave more bottom end, there's plenty available from Lo Bass. It's well attenuated, so what you get – right up to full boost – is a richer, warmer tone without significant loss of definition. It's a little different with Hi Bass, as upping the level by up to two thirds adds body to the D and G strings and a gnarly snap elsewhere, but too much is all soupy and sub-aquatic. Full boost is also not advisable with the Mid control, but up to that point you'll get a brighter edge to your sound with just a hint of burpy gurgle. With the treble controls, it's all about polishing your sound and adding detail, Lo Treble having the most audible effect across all strings. An aggressive but not overbearing crunch is the reward for fully boosting, whereas a much more subtle sparkle is the prize from Hi Treble.

If you're a fan of limiters, the on-board offering works really well and setting it up is easy-peasy. Subtle settings are our preference, as it'll only kick in when you really need it.

Verdict

Other than the lack of facility to switch channels (which still makes the D-600 an excellent choice for gigs requiring multiple basses), this is a top-notch amplifier. It's lightweight, the sound is excellent and we found it easy to dial up quality variations via the highly musical, well attenuated EQ. An RRP just short of £900 is not inexpensive but, as always, you do get what you pay for.

FINAL SCORE

PJB D-600 BASS AMPLIFIER	
Build Quality	**19** /20
Versatility	**17** /20
Sound	**18** /20
Value for money	**16** /20
Vibe	**16** /20
TOTAL	**86%**

FACTFILE
Phil Jones Bass D-600

DESCRIPTION **Single channel, 600W class D amplifier. Made in China**
PRICE **£899 with padded gigbag supplied**

CONTROLS **Two sets of Input Level, Lo-Bass, Hi-Bass, Mid, Lo-Treble and Hi-Treble controls and input gain switches. Limiter threshold level control and on/off switch, aux in level and Master Volume control. Input, aux in, line in, headphone, tuner, preamp out and FX loop jack sockets, two speaker out Speakon sockets, XLR DI out with ground/lift switch**
RANGE OPTIONS **None**

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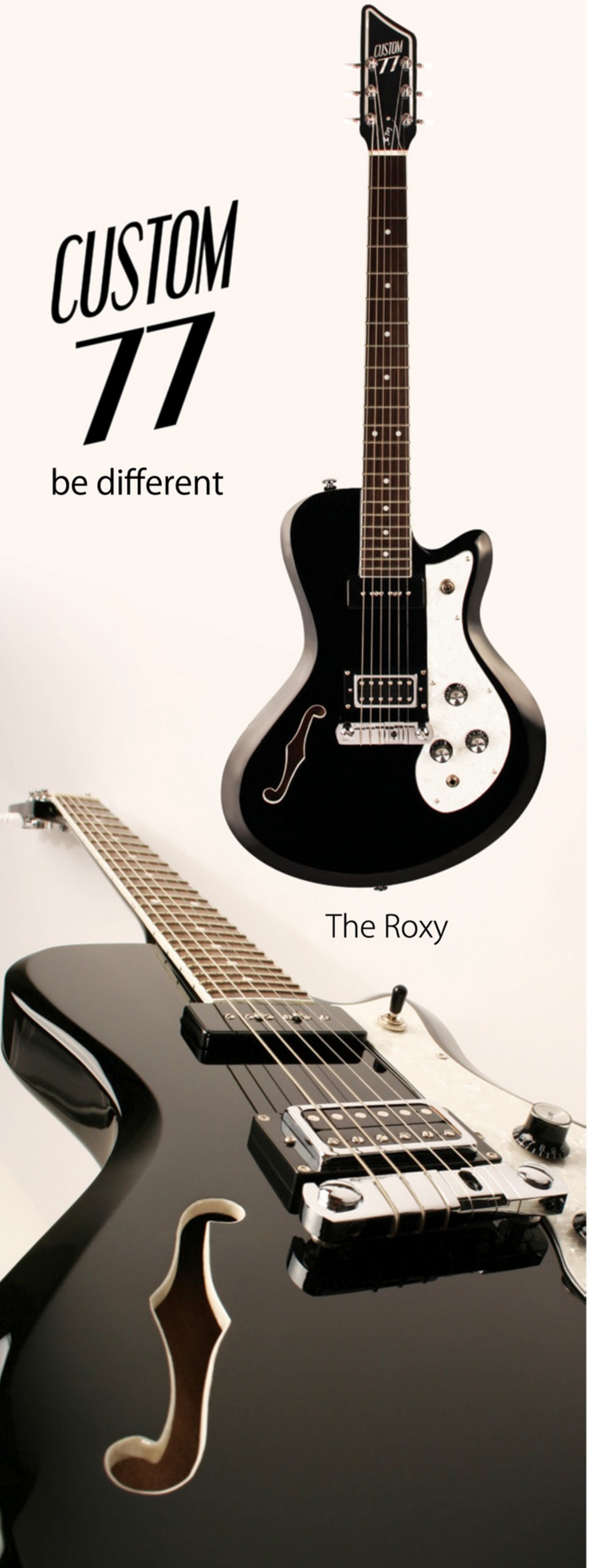

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ZOOM
B3 Bass Multi-FX & Amp Simulator

More effects than you can shake a stick at, plus sonic soundalikes of classic amps, plus a looper, plus a USB port for DAW use, plus rhythm patterns: it's the new Zoom for bass. Review by **Gareth Morgan**

Those of us who like pouring a little effected sauce over our bass sound have just been given the opportunity to do this some more courtesy of those Zoom people and their new B3 multi-FX and amp modelling unit.

The B3 is a fairly rugged floor unit that measures 234mm wide, 54mm high and 70mm deep and weighs 1.14kg/2.54lbs. You'll find your input and output jack sockets, balanced DI XLR socket and USB socket on the back, but the face is where the action is. Here you'll find three stomp switches with LED screens, three black dials and three black 'keys' each, plus a secondary line of mini keys above.

In technological terms, Zoom have employed their new ZFX-IV DSP effects processor which uses 32-bit floating-point processing to produce the simulations – three of which, whether a combination of modelled amp and effect or just effects, can be employed simultaneously. There are 12 amp models, including Ampeg SVT, Markbass Little Mark III and SWR SM-900, and 99 FX and DI patches (that's not 99 different effects- many are just different varieties of, say, distortion or reverb, and there are some combinations). Add to this a looper with up to 40 seconds capacity, a tuner, a simple drum machine and PC/Mac interface via USB for free online access to editing and downloading of patches, and you've got an unbelievable amount of stuff crammed into this small box, which runs on batteries or via the supplied PSU or the USB socket.

The B3 is pretty easy to get to grips with. There are 100 patches in 10 banks which, when in patch mode, can be selected by hitting the stomp switches; you edit sounds via the orange LED screens and controls and keys. There's plenty of info in the manual or online via a free download from the Zoom website.

Sounds

The B3 contains some redundant and impractical effects but also plenty of good stuff. There are six compressors/limiters; our favourite is the optical OptComp. The 11 overdrives/distortions are of varying degrees of nastiness, all of which feature a handy wet/dry blend function. You also get EQs, wahs, modulation filters, preamps, tremolo and vibrato, phasers, flangers and choruses, octave, pitch shift and synth effects, the latter featuring the excellent '70s-tastic Z-Syn. The looper is easy to set up, and has a tap tempo; it does take a little time to get used to recording layers on the fly, but patience and perseverance are ultimately rewarded.

Verdict

If you're in the market for a multi-FX unit, whether for live work or home recording, the B3 is a serious option. This little box is stuffed full of effects, many of practical value; the selection of simulated amps offers a decent cross-section, and the looper is a lot of fun when you get to grips with its idiosyncrasies. To top it all, the B3 is stunning value for money.

Stuffed full of effects with a selection of amp sims and a looper that's a lot of fun, the B3 is stunning value for money

FINAL SCORE

ZOOM B3	
Build Quality	**18**/20
Versatility	**16**/20
Sound	**17**/20
Value for money	**19**/20
Vibe	**16**/20
TOTAL	**86%**

FACTFILE
ZOOM B3

DESCRIPTION **Dedicated bass guitar multi-FX and amp simulator. Made in China**
PRICE **£185**

CONTROLS **Three FX/function select stomp switches, three display screens each with three parameter controls, Type Up and Down and Page keys. Patch Select Up and Down, Tap, Rhythm, Total, Store/Swap and Global keys. Input (with Passive/Active button), Right and Left/Mono/Phones Output and Control In jack sockets, XLR Balanced DI Out with Pre/Post and Ground/Lift buttons, USB port. True bypass, battery or USB or 9V p/s (included) operation**

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BABICZ
FCH 4

Replacement four-string bass bridge

PRICE **£79**
CONTACT **House Music Ltd, 01276 453079**
www.basscentre.com

Once upon a time replacement bridges such as the ever-popular Leo Quan Badass were a common upgrade. Those days could be back with the FCH 4 bass bridge, the latest product from Babicz, a company established in 2003 by Jeff Babicz and Jeff Carano to produce high-quality acoustic guitars.

Made in Taiwan, the bridge itself is solid metal with a chrome finish (black and gold are also available) and it's designed as a direct upgrade for P or J-style bridges and comes complete with five mounting holes. So, it's the familiar four-saddles-on-a-base-plate arrangement – but these saddles have a twist, as the Babicz-designed eCAM system facilitates full contact between the vibrating string and the body of the bass via the base plate... way, way more contact than the old two grub screws. This 'direct coupling', says Babicz, produces 'the least amount of acoustical impedance', resulting in improved tone and sustain. The saddles can be locked in place with Allen bolts, another boon in the quality of tone stakes. Oh, and there's a very useful 11-minute installation video online.

In Use

We tested the bridge using identical basses, one with the Babicz and one without, and can report some noticeable differences. With the FCH bridge the sound was bigger and richer and we noticed more overall volume, both acoustically and amplified. There's also a hint of extra sustain but, to be honest, the other audible benefits are more than enough to outweigh volume alone.

Verdict

Some of us are reluctant to customise or upgrade our instrument's hardware unless it breaks, but in this instance you might want to think again. Whether you play bass or guitar (they make various guitar models too), if you care about the quality of your sound, you'd do well to look into one.

FINAL SCORE

BABICZ FCH 4 BASS BRIDGE	
Build quality	**20**/20
Usability	**17**/20
Sound	**19**/20
Value for money	**18**/20
Looks	**19**/20
TOTAL	**93%**

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www.musicnomad.com

There are many guitar cleaning products on the market, but none that try as hard to convince us that they really care as Music Nomad. The company was set up by guitarist Rand Rognlien who, after 15 years earning his keep developing market-leading car cleaning products, decided what he wanted to do was start a website devoted to helping musicians negotiate the perilous world of the music industry.

The result is www.musicnomad.com, a site which aims to provide an impressive resource guide for musicians. From testimonials to tips on how to produce, sell and support your music, it's a veritable goldmine of information. Rognlien realised he needed some cash to support the venture so he decided to reawaken his expertise in cleaning products. Here we have just a taster of an extensive range that effectively claims to have been developed by one philanthropic guitarist to support the greater good of all guitarists... and drummers too, as there's a full range of drum cleaning kit as well.

In Use

The 'revolutionary' suede cloth has 90,000 microfibres per square inch, which certainly sounds plenty, and it does feel very pleasing to the touch. When used in conjunction with a quick spray of Guitar Detailer we have to admit it does remove all dirt, dust and other unidentifiable gunk with remarkable ease leaving even the most ancient and abused finishes ravishingly sparkly. It smells enticingly of new car, too.

Verdict

To judge whether these products are actually superior to others available is a tough call but they certainly do a great job, and as it's all for a good, guitar-centric cause, it's thumbs up from us.

FINAL SCORE

GUITAR DETAILER & MICROFIBRE SUEDE CLOTH	
Build quality	**18**/20
Usability	**18**/20
Charitability	**18**/20
Value for money	**16**/20
Vibe	**16**/20
TOTAL	**86%**

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HOOKED ON CLASSICS

MUSICAL DIFFERENCES

Seller's remorse is an evil green goblin that can haunt your waking hours and destroy your sleep. But be strong, urges Phil Harris, who has broken up a few guitar relationships in his time; sometimes you just have to be firm...

Over the past few years we've looked at collecting guitars from a multitude of angles, and as much as it might pain you to hear it (and me to write it), getting rid of guitars is an essential aspect that can't be ignored. If you've got an infinite amount of money and storage space, maybe you can just keep on acquiring vintage gear forever – and good luck, if that's the case. For the rest of us, having a guitar collection can lead to some hard decisions.

As a businessman, a family man and a guitar lover I've suffered mental anguish many times over the years. I've bought and kept hold of plenty of guitars when I knew it wasn't a sound business decision; it was all down to my passion for them. Sometimes this has worked out for me: once, I nearly sold a Les Paul in order to pay for some double glazing, and the value of the guitar soared between that point and the time I sold the guitar several years later.

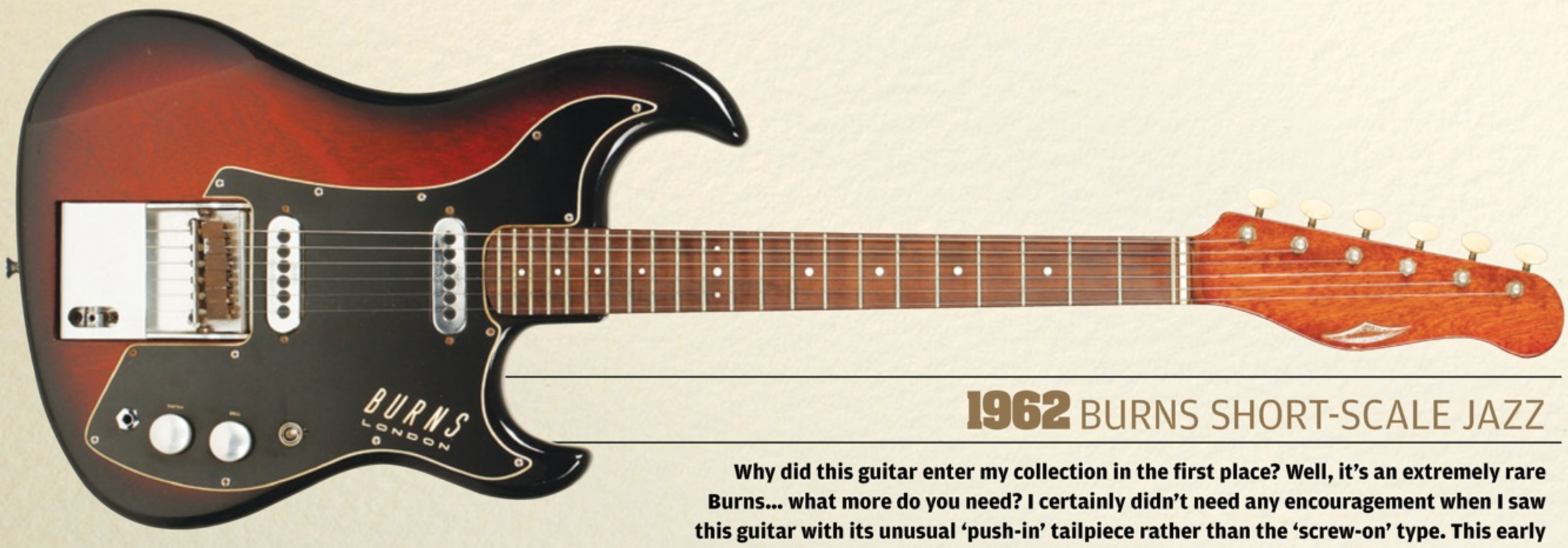
I've been a bit a wheel-dealer since a young age, but early on I learned some painful lessons regarding the perils in the world and the gambles you can make. As a teenager I worked for a year to get hold of a Fender Strat for £75. At that point I didn't know about how setting a guitar up properly could make all the difference, so I just thought it wasn't very good. So off I went to the West End, and saw a three-pickup Rickenbacker in a shop. I don't know what possessed me, but I asked about a deal and they gave me the Rickenbacker for the Strat and £10 (they generously said that I could pay the £10 at a later date). All the way home I was agonising whether I'd made the right decision, and as soon as I plugged it into my Selmer I knew I'd made a mistake; the string-spacing and the balance was all wrong. Basically, Rickenbackers are as suited to me as a pair of 26" waist trousers.

In a panic I rushed back to the shop and told them I couldn't afford the £10. They knew they had a deal, so said they'd let me off the tenner. When I said that it didn't matter and that I wanted the guitar back, they told me that I couldn't because it had already been sent to be fixed up – a likely story, but one I couldn't disprove. I was so disgusted I went round to another shop and swapped the Rickenbacker for a Marshall 50 worth £55. I didn't get on with the amp and sold it for £35.

This sorry tale to taught me not to get rid of things before I'm sure, and to completely understand the nature of the gear I'm contemplating giving up. When you're certain it isn't right for you, though, you should gird your loins and move something on, no matter how good it is. You give the guitar or amp the chance to go to a more deserving owner who'll appreciate it, and you'll feel better about yourself... trust me. But if you know you love it, even if you don't play it as much as you like, then fight tooth and nail to keep it.

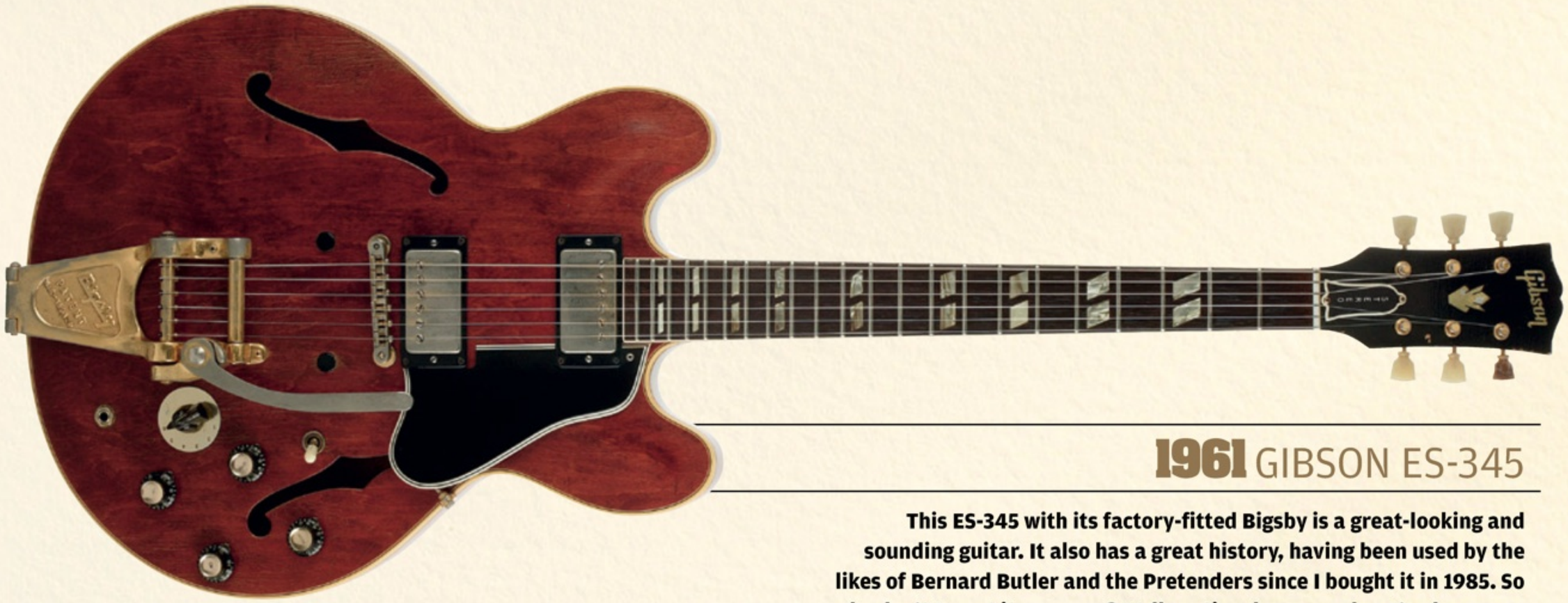
When you're sure something isn't right for you, you should move it on, no matter how good it is

However, there's nothing wrong in taking stock of your collection every once in a while and asking 'Why am I keeping this?' This column has been prompted by me doing exactly the same thing in recent times, and all the following instruments are things that I've decided should go to a better home – all with the reasons why. I promise to be a big brave soldier about the whole affair...



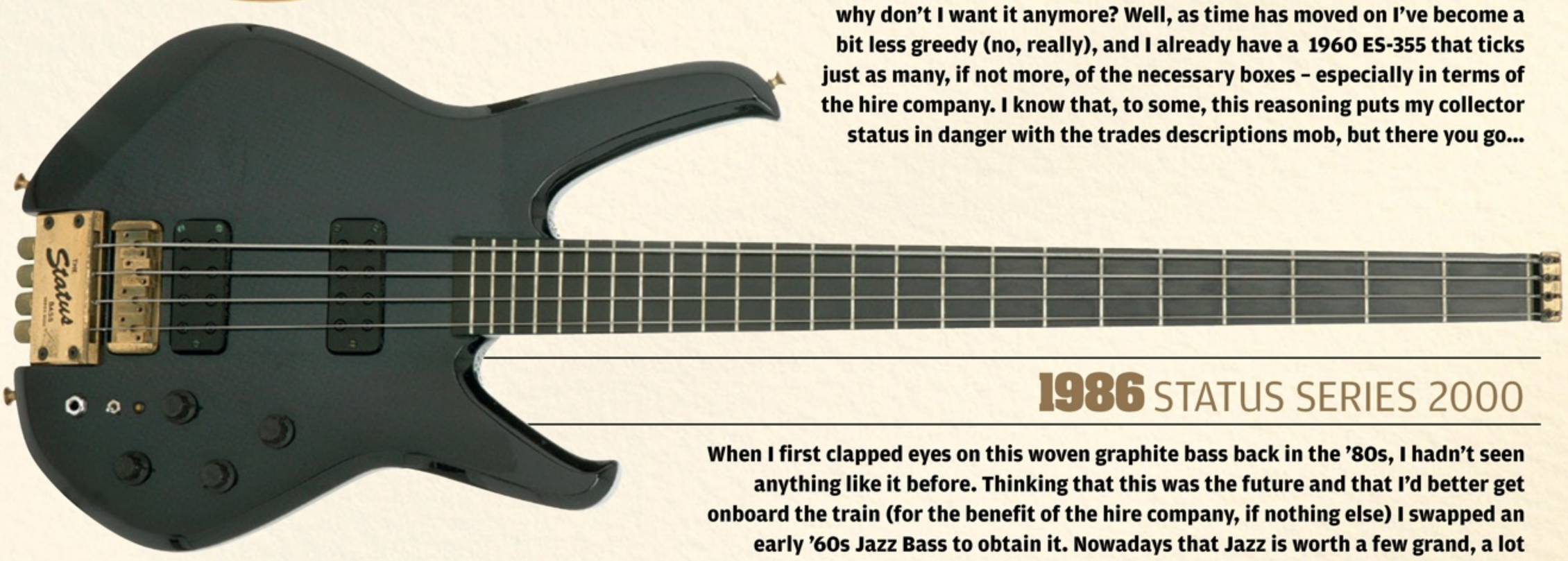
1962 BURNS SHORT-SCALE JAZZ

Why did this guitar enter my collection in the first place? Well, it's an extremely rare Burns... what more do you need? I certainly didn't need any encouragement when I saw this guitar with its unusual 'push-in' tailpiece rather than the 'screw-on' type. This early two-pickup version also features a mahogany body and neck, something I've never seen on any other Burns in my life. This has been given its marching orders from my collection simply because I've admitted to myself that a short-scale guitar isn't for me...



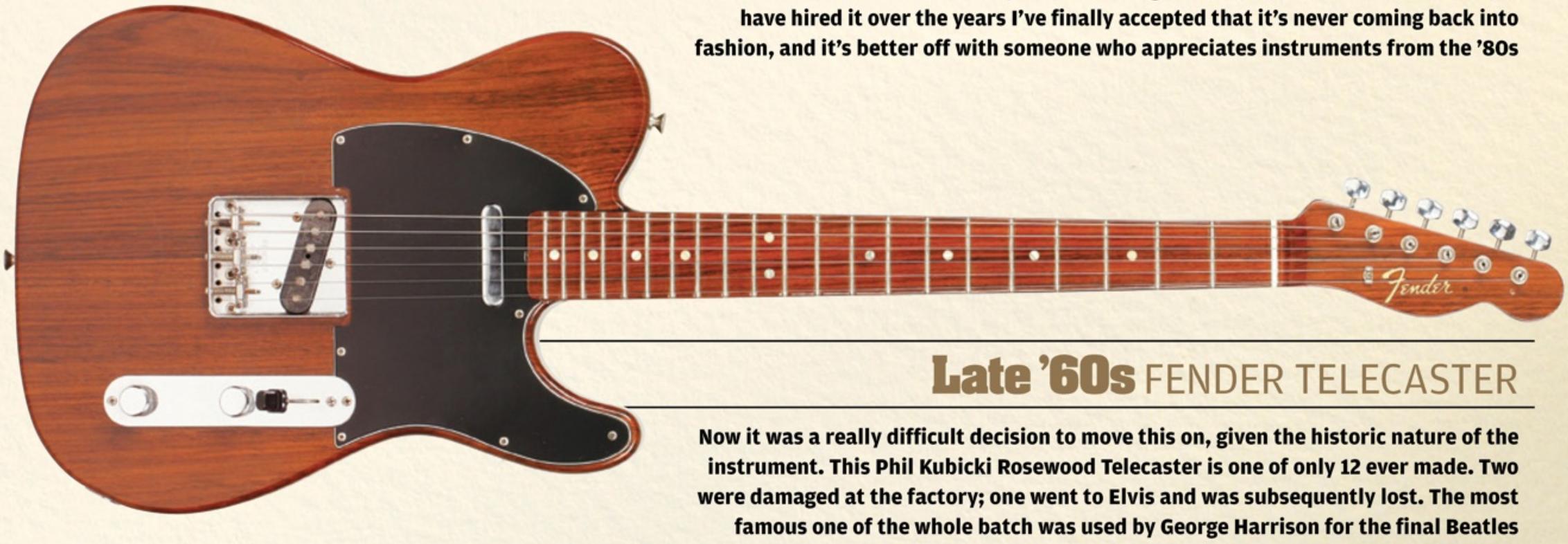
1961 GIBSON ES-345

This ES-345 with its factory-fitted Bigsby is a great-looking and sounding guitar. It also has a great history, having been used by the likes of Bernard Butler and the Pretenders since I bought it in 1985. So why don't I want it anymore? Well, as time has moved on I've become a bit less greedy (no, really), and I already have a 1960 ES-355 that ticks just as many, if not more, of the necessary boxes – especially in terms of the hire company. I know that, to some, this reasoning puts my collector status in danger with the trades descriptions mob, but there you go...



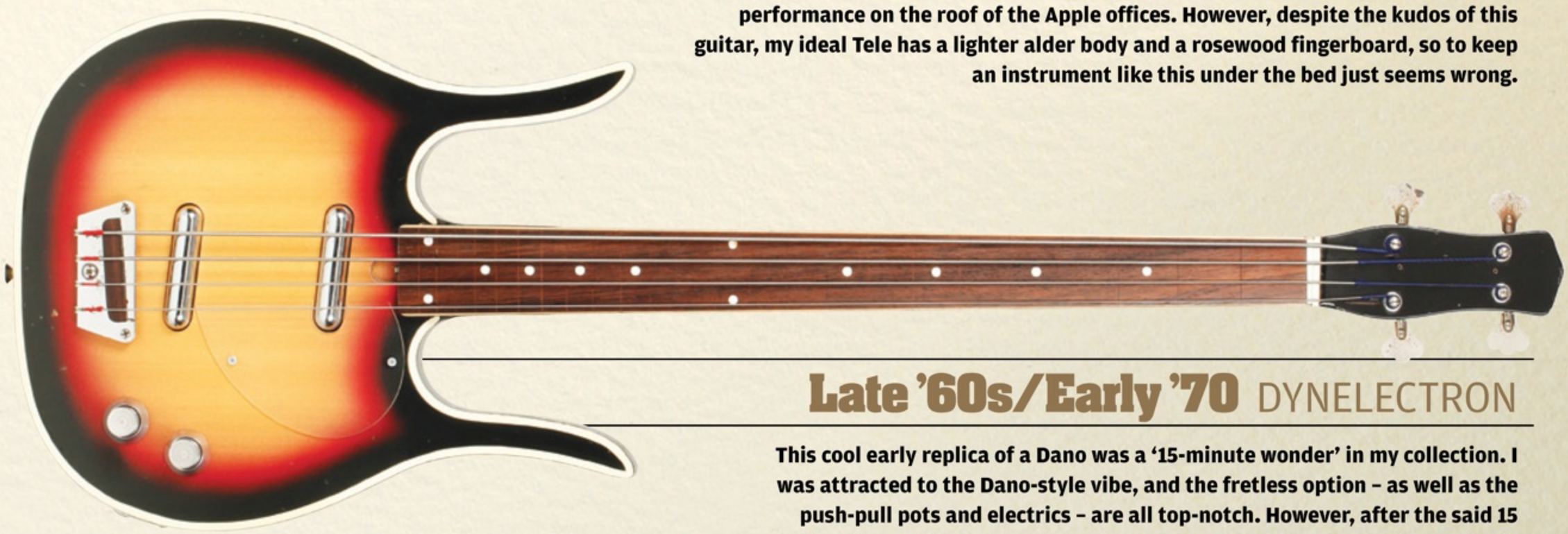
1986 STATUS SERIES 2000

When I first clapped eyes on this woven graphite bass back in the '80s, I hadn't seen anything like it before. Thinking that this was the future and that I'd better get onboard the train (for the benefit of the hire company, if nothing else) I swapped an early '60s Jazz Bass to obtain it. Nowadays that Jazz is worth a few grand, a lot more than this one is worth, despite having a '003' serial number. As few people have hired it over the years I've finally accepted that it's never coming back into fashion, and it's better off with someone who appreciates instruments from the '80s



Late '60s FENDER TELECASTER

Now it was a really difficult decision to move this on, given the historic nature of the instrument. This Phil Kubicki Rosewood Telecaster is one of only 12 ever made. Two were damaged at the factory; one went to Elvis and was subsequently lost. The most famous one of the whole batch was used by George Harrison for the final Beatles performance on the roof of the Apple offices. However, despite the kudos of this guitar, my ideal Tele has a lighter alder body and a rosewood fingerboard, so to keep an instrument like this under the bed just seems wrong.



Late '60s/Early '70 DYNELECTRON

This cool early replica of a Dano was a '15-minute wonder' in my collection. I was attracted to the Dano-style vibe, and the fretless option – as well as the push-pull pots and electrics – are all top-notch. However, after the said 15 minutes, the realisation that it's of no real use to me in any capacity really hit home. This quirky instrument deserves a far better fate...

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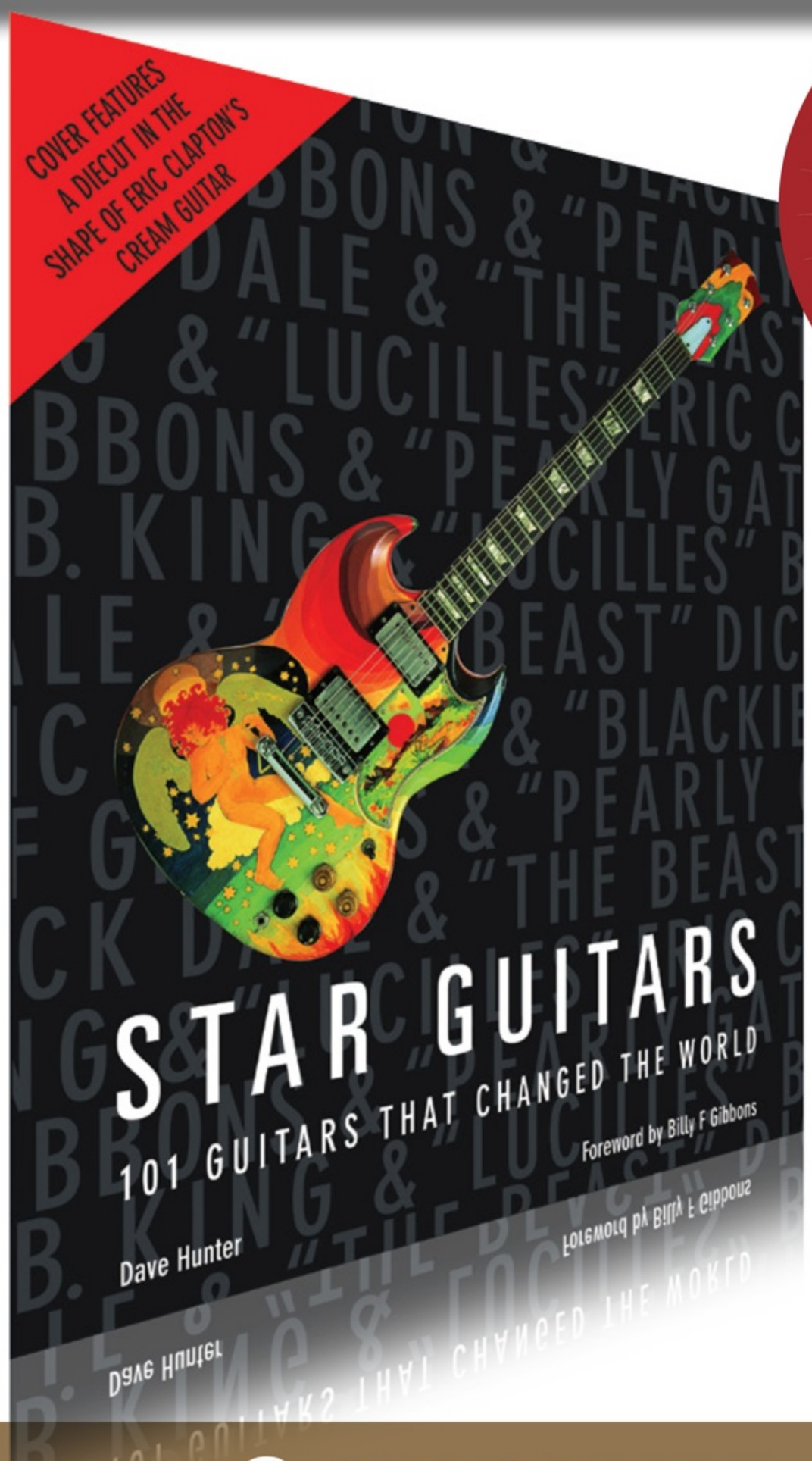

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THE BISHOP OF DENMARK STREET

SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

When your shop is in London and most of the great old guitars are languishing in Kansas or Missouri, an inevitable amount of transatlantic travel is involved. Sid Bishop recalls the glory days

Having great staff is one essential for having a successful business, but another is having great stock. Customers came back to Top Gear time and time again because of the quality and quantity of our stock, and it was quite a mission to obtain the right guitars.

One fertile purchasing ground was across the Atlantic. Once Americans had woken up to the fact that guitars could fetch a great deal more in the UK than they would ever do gathering dust on some pawnshop wall in the rural mid-west, some of them thought it would be a really cool idea to gather together a decent small batch and bring them over, making a profit that would, at the very least, cover the cost of the plane tickets.

One important aspect that they usually neglected to factor in was UK import duty and VAT. Many figured they would get away with not declaring these instruments by simply walking right through the green channel at Heathrow. Many did exactly that, but assuming they made it through unchallenged, they were in for an unpleasant surprise when they attempted to sell them. We often found ourselves having to send such people down to our nearby customs office in Shaftesbury Avenue so that duties and taxes could be paid, ensuring that any transaction could proceed. Off they would go, moaning and protesting, but they didn't have much choice, apart from taking the stuff home again.

We didn't have much choice, either; the cruel reality was that we had to take great care to ensure that everything we bought and sold had been imported legally. The Customs and Excise authorities would swoop on our shop – and most of the others who dealt in secondhand equipment – on a regular unannounced basis to make sure all the relevant paperwork was in order. If not, the stock would be impounded on the spot, and we would face the probability of a big fine. We would be given the opportunity of buying the offending item back at a later date, at their idea of retail value of course, or it would go to public auction. This only happened to us once, and we made sure it never happened again.

Despite all this the trade continued for quite a while, and we were often offered more stock than we could handle. Indeed at times some was regretfully turned down as we either had no space or had simply run out of money.

Rather than sitting back and waiting for Americans to fly in with a few odd bits from time to time, or even buying from UK-based dealers such as Chris Trigg or Eric Dixon who all made regular transatlantic expeditions, once or perhaps twice a year Rod, Craig and/or Ken from Top Gear would go to the US on a buying trip. This was the best way to buy substantial quantities at a time, and the cheapest. They'd return loaded down with as many as 20 or 30 guitars... mostly bread-and-butter Fenders and Gibsons that wouldn't hang around too long, making us a good quick profit. Sometimes they would return with something slightly rarer, like an old blond Byrdland, or a Gretsch Country Club. I can recall almost salivating at my first sight of an all-aluminium Veleno. We might also end up with a Gibson Flying V or two, a Travis Bean, or a scarce Gretsch White Falcon. I also distinctly remember a Gibson ES-175 Charlie Christian, and how I wish now that I'd bought that... not to mention a three-pickup 1959 Les Paul Custom with Switchmaster wiring!

Those golden days are long gone. Looking back, one must be reminded that the exchange rate throughout most of the '60s and '70s was around $2.45 to $2.50 to the pound. In later years the amount of dollars that your pound would buy plummeted considerably. Exporters would rub their hands with glee at a pound worth $1.50, and ideally even less, but for a business such as Top Gear who survived primarily by retailing imported merchandise, the devaluation represented an absolute disaster... and it still does.

Waltzing through the green channel with a case under your arm was only half the battle

Photo: copyright Alamy

'Visiting Americans with guitars often assumed they could walk straight through Customs, but they were in for an unpleasant surprise'

Status SYMBOLS

Currently rocking out with a Quo tribute act, Martin Dufficy has an enviable guitar collection. **Lars Mullen** – no stranger to the 12-bar concept himself – boogies on down for a closer inspection

Two homebuilds: a sequoia Warmoth special and an Allparts slimline semi

Of course, having a sizeable number of guitars at your disposal is something that, in itself, requires no justification whatsoever. But just for extra back-up, Martin Dufficy makes sure that each of his has a sound reason for its existence by keeping busy in several bands, one covering the mighty Quo, the other covering – well, just about everything. If he ever needs a Tele, a Strat, an SG, a Firebird, an acoustic, a resonator... crikey, what a coincidence, there's one right here. And Martin's guitar obsession extends even further, for he's found a new, deeper passion – making guitars himself, plus winding his own pickups.

'I'd always wanted to make a guitar, though it didn't happen for years,' he explains. 'I made a few half-hearted efforts using basic wooden bodies and average hardware and they sounded and played okay, for first-timers.

'Then I heard that the original Patrick Eggle guitar company in Coventry was closing down and had a sale of unfinished body parts, so I went over there and cherry-picked a really nice body and neck from their New Yorker series plus a box of gold hardware. That was a complete learning curve! I assembled, re-assembled, sprayed and re-sprayed that guitar many times just for the fun of it. It ended up finished in gold with matching hardware and cream binding.

'It all began to get serious when I thought "Why pay someone to cut the nut slots?" I ended up buying various tools and bits of machinery to handle the more intricate side of building.'

Martin still has one of the first guitars he built, with a body carved from a large piece of solid sequoia redwood, stained dark red and fitted with contrasting cream binding. The scratchplate is white pearloid, the hardware is gold-plated and made by Gotoh, the neck is an Allparts, and the pickups are Martin's own. 'The mass of the sequoia body gives it a pretty dark sound,' he comments. 'It's more akin to a Les Paul than a Fender but it's still got a lot of top end, and even with the floating vibrato there's heaps of sustain. It's a bit unusual, but it's got quite a versatile sound.'

Next in Martin's home-built armoury is a slim semi-solid built from Warmoth parts including a lightweight swamp ash body and a one-piece birdseye maple neck. 'I think the dark tortoiseshell scratchplate contrasts really well,' Martin says proudly. 'The pickups on this one are Seymour Duncans.'

You won't have failed to notice that Martin has a thing – okay, an all-consuming passion – for Telecasters. 'For me, a Tele has the definitive electric guitar sound,' he decides. 'It's been said so many times... cars, washing machines and the like change so much over the years, but the good old Telecaster has hardly altered in over 60 years.

'Here's a nice trio of Teles. The black one is a '77, with the ash body and maple neck – for me, that's the definitive combination. It's warm and bright, a perfect middle ground.

'The one in the middle is a blonde '72 which I found on eBay in America. It's really worn, but in all the correct places – the real vintage look. This one's ash and maple again, and it's really heavy. Crank this one through a valve amp and it's just heaven. On the right is a '52 USA reissue in see-through butterscotch; this one's much lighter, and it's got a much warmer tone.'

Left, a green Rossi-style Warmoth custom; centre, another homebuild; right, an import with Gibson and Fender pickups

'For me, a Telecaster has the definitive electric guitar sound. It's hardly changed in 60 years'

Let's move on to the next three (pictured above). 'The see-through green one is a Warmoth partscaster I built,' Martin says. 'Again, ash body, maple neck. I've had this one for over 12 years. I put it together with Francis Rossi in mind, and it's come in handy as I use it full-time in our Quo line-up. Mind you, I couldn't quite bring myself to drill a hole in the body like his! The neck pickup is a standard Tele unit but the bridge pickup is one of my own scatter-wound ones, modelled on a '50s model but with extra clarity on the bottom. It's very bright, but with a mid-range boost... ideal for Quo stuff.

'I built this white guitar with the rosewood fingerboard from the left-over slab of sequoia redwood, and I chose the colour because of Rick Parfitt's Telecaster. I keep this one tuned to B and loaded with 11-58 gauge strings, and I use a capo on the fourth fret. It's an ideal guitar for playing *Down Down*, and with a Seymour Duncan Broadcaster in the neck and Quarter Pounder pickup at the bridge it sounds the part too.

'The sunburst one is a very lightweight Chinese-made basswood-bodied copy. It's got an old Gibson T-top humbucker in the neck and a Fender Vintage '52 Tele pickup at the bridge. I've used this guitar for years in a band called Starving Dogs. The name, by the way, has been sensibly shortened from The Birmingham Home For Lost And Starving Dogs, a sign that you can see on a train ride into Birmingham's New Street railway station... but that's another story!'

Martin's been fascinated by the arcane art of pickup-making for about three years. 'I seem to be supplying myself, our band and anyone else who calls me up and asks for a custom wound unit,' he says. 'It all began when I started looking into what makes a good pickup, and realised that there's a lot of smoke and mirrors about the whole process.

'It wasn't hard to work out that hand-winding and scatter-winding the wire around the coil reduces the capacitance in the output, and that gives you a pure sound without any harsh ice-picky treble frequencies, plus a much clearer midrange and a balanced, ➔

Three Fender Telecasters: a black '77, a blonde '72 and a butterscotch '52 reissue

A mahogany-body custom, a teal green import with Martin's pickups, and a John Birch-body special

Fender Strats: a vintage bitsa with a Tele Deluxe neck and a black/maple '77

'Making pickups isn't cheap, but there's a great satisfaction in getting a sound you've built'

tight low end. Machine-wired pickups can often sound hard, with a muffled bass response. There's also the over-wound business: Fender single coils were all wound by hand up to 1965, so some were over-wound while others didn't meet their target. There's a huge variation in Fender pickups... it probably depends on how busy the staff were chatting at the time!

'I've sourced all the materials and machinery from the internet; it's certainly not cheap, but there's an immense satisfaction about standing on stage and getting a cool sound that I've built all myself.

'I've installed one of my over-wound '50s pickups in the bridge position of a solid mahogany Tele which I acquired from Gav's Guitar Garage in Scotland. This pickup is very beefy, and with all that mahogany it delivers a very chunky sound. At the moment it has a six-saddle bridge which I'm about to change back to an ashtray.

'The teal green alder-bodied one is an off-shore copy. I've replaced the wiring and pickups – just as an exercise, really. I was going to move it on but it plays and sounds so nice that I think it'll stay.

'The final one, the cream-bodied one with the two humbuckers, is a real hybrid. It started life as a lightweight ash John Birch body that had been drastically finished in brown fence paint – not by John Birch, I hasten to add. I stripped that off and mixed up what I thought looked like a pretty good imitation of vintage white, and routed it out for some Ibanez Super 70 humbuckers which I took off a big-bodied Antoria semi-acoustic. I then realised the larger pickups wouldn't fit, so I had to make pearloid surrounds to house the pickups. They sound fantastic with the lightweight body – it's great for slide.'

Next come four Strats. 'The white one has a neck taken from a Tele Deluxe with wider, higher frets, and I've put in some pickups designed to beef up the midrange a little. I think it's worked... solos and fast runs seem to soar up above the band. It's great to play.

'The black Strat is a '77, and on this one the pickups have more of a scooped sound with plenty of high and deep lows – a kind of 'on the edge' *Wind Cries Mary* vibe. There are some very good, authentic-sounding pickups on the market, but I still think there's an age thing going on that contributes to that vintage single coil sound. Also, the woods maturing and drying out makes a difference, too.

'I'm lucky enough to have a real fiesta red '62 Strat as a sound benchmark. I love this guitar – I've not had it that long. I was a little sceptical at first about the finish, but I've since found out that it's identical to the colour that Derek Adams used to use on a commercial basis for companies in the '60s like Selmer, who were getting so many requests for fiesta red Strats that they employed his spraying skills. If you look at the wear, you can see it was originally sunburst. It's pretty much stock, although three position markers have been replaced with abalone... the original clay dots probably fell out.

'Another cool Strat is this fiesta red Custom Shop Closet Classic – just slightly reliced. There's a lot of mojo going on here. Compare it to the '62 and you can tell that Fender got it spot on with the weight and feel. It passes the "blindfold test" with ease.

'It felt really great on my 50th birthday to wake up to this limited edition Fender Jaguar in sea foam green with matching headstock, a thin nitro finish, 6105 Dunlop frets and a shallow 9.5" fingerboard radius. This guitar is so versatile with all the pickup combinations and really sensitive, effortless vibrato. It sounds big and open ... great through my 2x10" Fender Vibrolux Reverb or this little 15W Fender Blues Junior.

'I've always had a hankering for big semis like Gretsches but at the time I couldn't ➔

Left, a Fender Custom Shop CC Strat. Right: the real thing from 1962

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Customised Antoria/Ibanez 175 copy with TV Jones pickups and flatwound strings

Seafoam green Fender Jaguar reissue with matching headstock

afford the vintage prices, so I "Gretsch-ified" my old Antoria. It's basically a 1977 Ibanez copy of a Gibson 175, re-branded for import into the UK... it still has an Ibanez label inside. I fitted a pair of medium-low output TV Jones pickups styled on the original Filter'Trons, a Bigsby, and flatwound strings. It's turned out to be a great rockabilly guitar.

'We do a lot of Queen songs in Starving Dogs so it made sense to get a correct-looking Burns. I use it with a Vox AC30 and Hawk treble booster. It nails the sound... and with a Brian May wig and waistcoat, say no more!

'The other half of the equation for me is a decent valve amp. Both Orange and Marshall did it for me from day one, just for their looks alone. The Teles sound wonderful though the Marshall TSL heads, at any volume, while my rare '79 Superbass 100 comes alive at full throttle. I can remember how gobsmacked were all were in the early '70s at these big orange-coloured amps. All the popular bands of the day had a wall of Oranges behind them. As you can see I have quite a selection here – the Tiny Terror, various heads and what must be some of the heaviest 4x12" cabs in the world. I also have a Volt head, made in the UK, with a 0001 serial number. It's based on a JTM45 but loaded with KT88 valves. It's a real no-nonsense 60-watter... just set this up halfway with an overdrive pedal, and you're cooking.

'I have a small acoustic collection here that all get played on a regular basis. The Aria Maccaferri is really nice – I used this one in a third band I'm in called the Fabulous Jazz Dogs. It's trumpet, double bass and all that kinda thing, but we play Nirvana and rock covers.

'The big-bodied Guild Super Jumbo is an electric player's garden guitar, great for hot sunny songwriting evenings... it also records really well. Getting smaller, we have this Tanglewood electro from their Evolution Series with some really nice abalone inlay, and smaller still is the Martin Ltd Edition Cowboy guitar, built from laminate woods and composites. The sound is quite amazing, considering it's such a little body. This is an ideal travelling guitar.

'I enjoy slide work, and this Beltona tri-cone resonator is really nice. Since it's been fitted with a Highlander resonator pickup I've been doing gigs with it. I didn't want to drill a hole in the nickel-plated body, so I've gently attached the jack socket inside the metal lattice work, which seems to work well.'

We certainly aren't surprised when Martin says he built the next guitar, another resonator, weighing a hefty 11kg/24.3lbs.

'This is a real man's guitar,' he grins. 'It's best played sitting down... and even then you'll probably get a numb leg. It was a project that my brother and I completed about 12 years ago. He works in the engineering business and bought me the steel for the body but we couldn't get the standard resonator thickness, only a really thick-gauge bell brass with a high nickel content, hence the weight. I wanted another white guitar, and thought a white resonator would be rather unusual. I was a little worried the paint might diffuse the sound, but it chimes like a good 'un. I'm pleased with it – it wasn't that easy to get the neck angle right.'

'I fitted the Antoria with TV Jones pickups and a Bigsby. It's now a great rockabilly guitar'

Martin isn't exclusively a Fender fan. 'I have two Les Paul Customs that I use in Starving Dogs – a white '91, now yellowing nicely and with a case signed by Scott Gorham, Eric Bell and Snowy White, and a black 2007 Custom Shop '68 reissue which I think might be quite rare as it has nickel-plated hardware instead of gold. Both of these are everything Les Paul Customs should be – heavy, with tons of sustain. The white one is the loudest, with a really dark sound; the ➔

The Brian May rig: Burns guitar, Vox AC30 and a Hawk treble booster

Acoustic corner: Aria gypsy jazzer, Martin Cowboy, Guild jumbo and a Tanglewood Evolution

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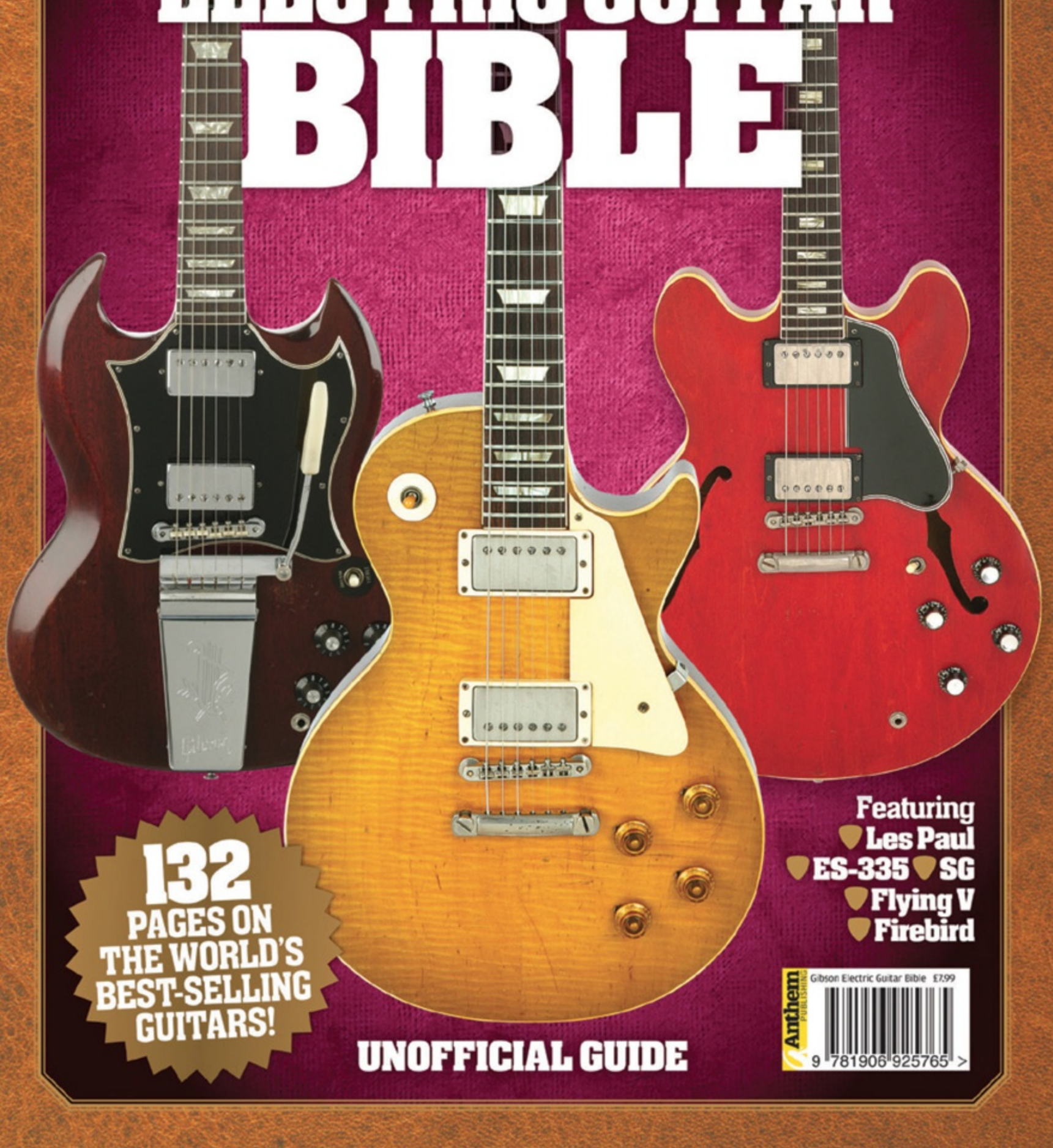

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Martin with his home-crafted bell brass resonator and a Beltona tri-cone

Two Gibson Les Paul Customs – a white 1991 model and a 2007 Custom Shop '68 reissue

A Les Paul Special with P90s and a SG Special, Martin's first-ever Gibson

black one has Burstbuckers and more of a classic vintage bark.

'Next is a Les Paul Special in matt white with the grain showing through. The P90s have a really snappy response. It sounds fab straight into any of the Orange amps... a bit noisy, but you'd expect that with high gain.

'This SG Special was the first Gibson I ever bought. It doesn't have fingerboard binding or block inlays, but I love the big neck profile and the ebony fingerboard. I'm starting to realise I must like white guitars!

'I'd been searching for a decent 335 for years but could never find the right one. These days I have a Gibson 345 with the Varitone switch, which takes the whole concept to a different level. It can do every playing style, and it's an ideal covers guitar. I don't gig with it much, because of the larger body I keep walking into amps... and people. I also have a Korean Epiphone Dot; it's lighter than the 345, but the sustain is amazing and it plays and sounds wonderful.

'The SG Special was the first Gibson I bought. I'm starting to realise that I like white guitars'

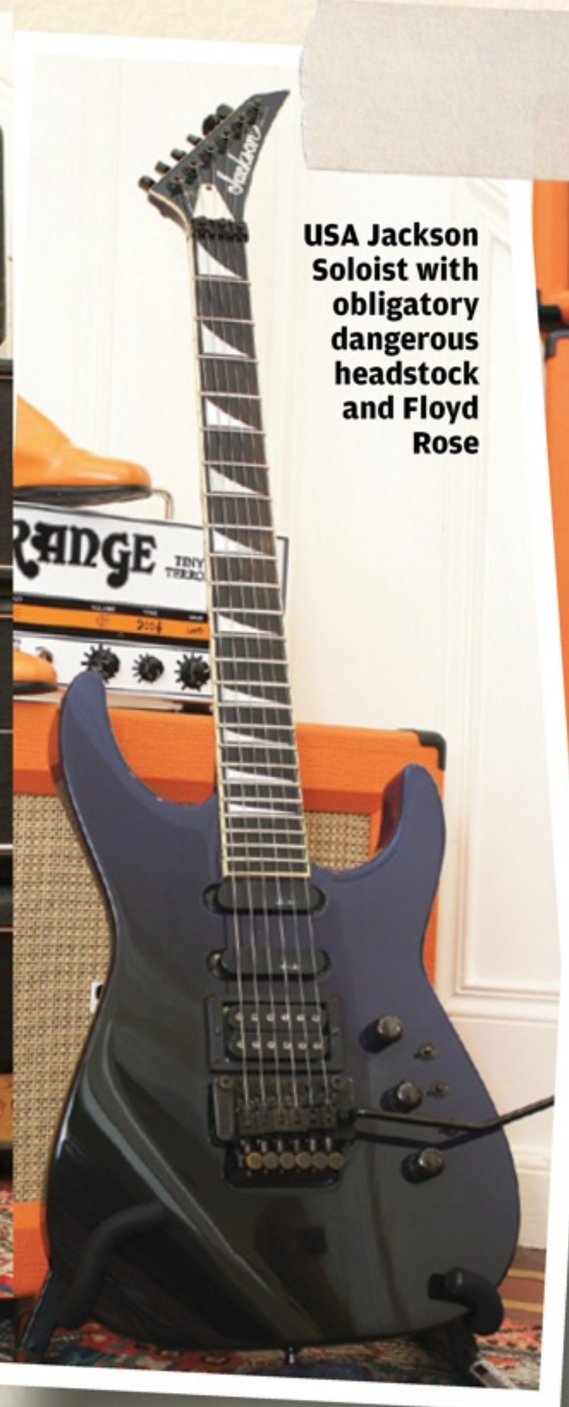
'I got this Epiphone twin neck to do all the obvious songs like *Stairway To Heaven* and Bon Jovi's *Dead Or Alive*, neither of which we do in the band any more, but at least I've got a cool, well-made doubleneck.

'I've always been a big fan of Jeff Beck, who used a USA Jackson Soloist during the '80s like this one. It's my only pointy guitar, and it's unbelievably loud. The 18v actives murder the front end of any amp! It's built for power and sustain, but you can get some really nice clean tones if you're careful. It's great... it would be better if it was white, though!

'This '65 Gibson Firebird with the non-reverse body, original vibrola vibrato and three P90s is a new addition to my collection. It's aged beautifully, with cracks in the lacquer and gentle fading here and there. I do gig this one quite a bit, and I'm getting some really favourable comments on the sound, especially the sustain. No matter how much overdrive I have on the amps it'll rarely jump to the next octave, but just keeps on going and going. It's just an awesome guitar.

'By the way, I read *Private Collection* every month and have to laugh when someone says they have to compensate for a new guitar with a new handbag or pair of shoes for their partner. Well, my wife has over 300 pairs now, and my daughter is studying shoe design at university, so there's probably five times the amount of shoes there should be in this house! The last pair I bought her was an orange pair which match the amps perfectly – although I've not seen her wearing them yet...'

Stairway to a slipped disc: an Epiphone doubleneck 6/12



USA Jackson Soloist with obligatory dangerous headstock and Floyd Rose

Gibson Firebird III from 1965, the first year of the non-reverse bodies

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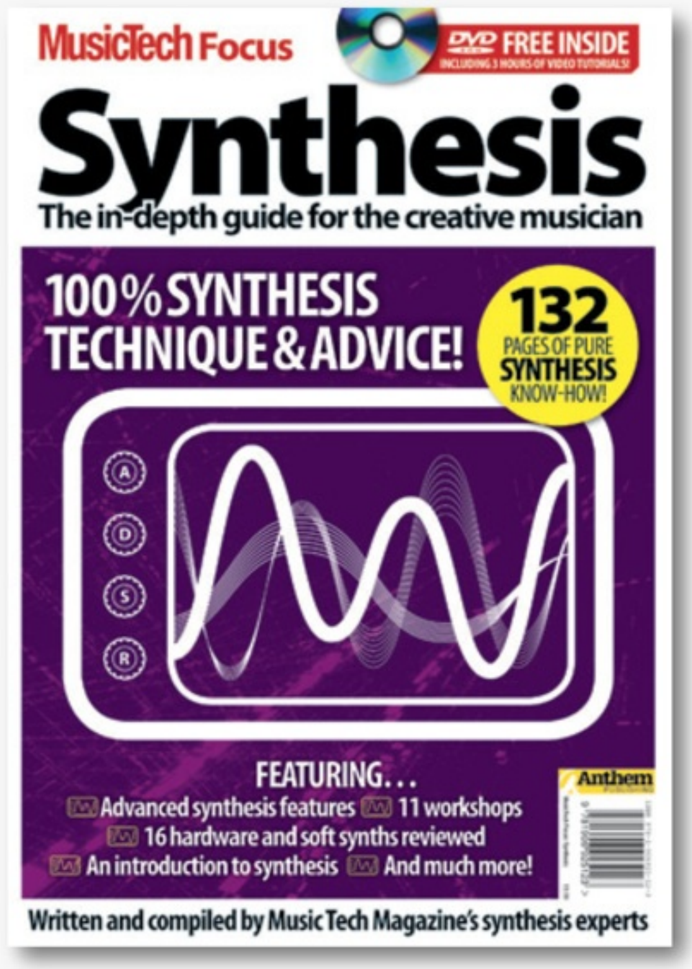

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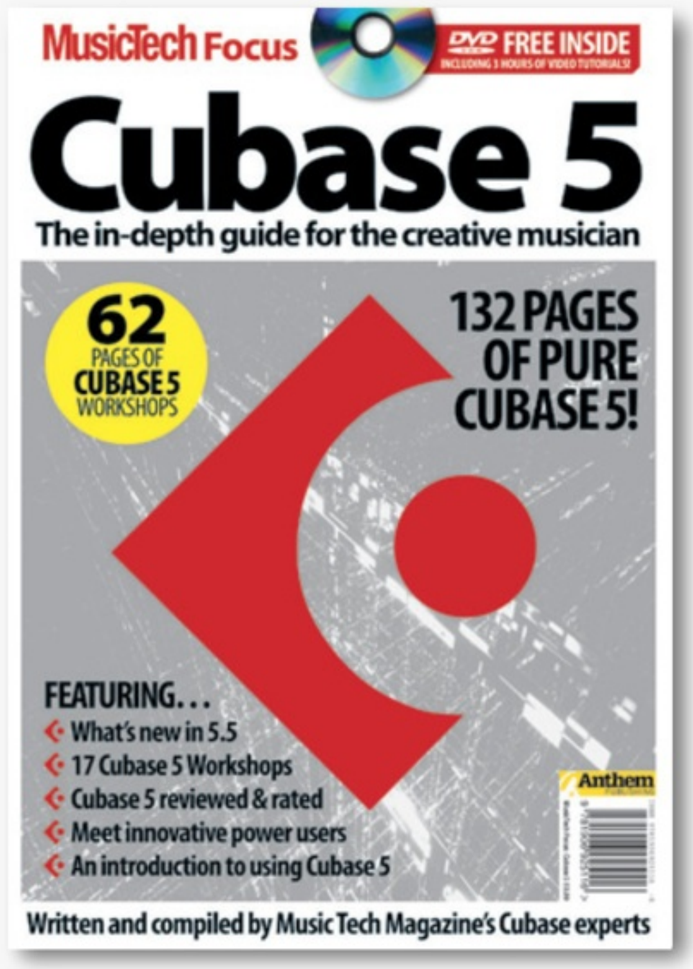

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WORKSHOP

Tranny Tricks

It's almost miraculous what you can achieve with a magnetic core and a few coils of wire. This month **Huw Price** is checking out three cheap, easy and extremely useful transformer-based projects

PARTS LIST

PICKUP SIMULATOR

- Aluminium box 92mm x 38mm x 31mm
- Xicon 42TL019 transformer (from Mouser)
- 2 x SPDT mini-switches
- 25K audio taper potentiometer (15mm diameter)
- 2 x 1/4" mono jack sockets

REAMP BOX

- Aluminium box 120mm x 65mm x 40mm
- Tamura 838-MET-31 600:600 transformer
- Male XLR socket
- 1/4" mono jack socket
- SPDT mini switch
- Treble bleed capacitor - values around 330pF
- 680 Ohm resistor
- 10K audio taper potentiometer
- 50K linear potentiometer (15mm diameter)

DI BOX

- Aluminium box 120mm x65mm x40mm
- Male XLR socket
- 2 x 1/4" mono jack socket
- SPDT mini switch and DPDT switch
- Quality transformer (around 12:1 ratio) - eg Carnhill VTB9072, Jensen JT-DB-E, Sowter 4243 or 8044
- 680pF capacitor (optional)

TOOLBOX

- Soldering iron
- Voltmeter
- Electric drill
- Step cutter (aka cone cutter)
- Q Max punch - approx 22.5mm diameter

Contacts

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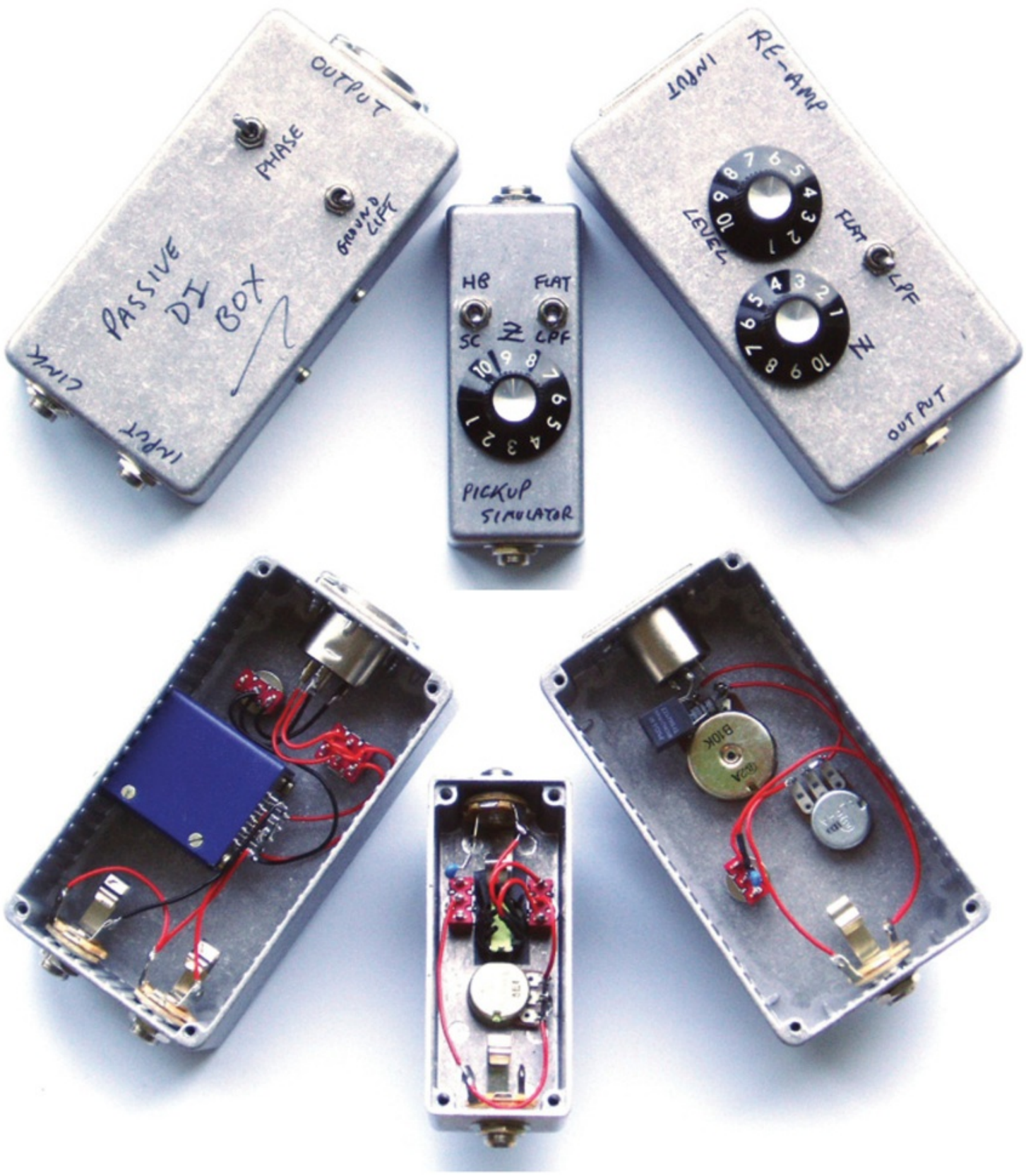


We're departing from our usual step-by-step guides this month, because these projects are so easy that you should be able to figure out how to put them together from looking at our diagrams, photos and parts list. It's more important that you fully understand how they work and how they can be used.

So what are we planning? Well, three incredibly useful gadgets – not effects, as such, but devices that can really improve your sound nonetheless. First, there's what we call a pickup simulator, a widget that can have a fantastic effect on old-school pedals. Second, there's a re-amp box – a recording device which makes your amp think it's talking to a guitar, not a computer. And third, a must-have device for anybody's gigbag, a passive DI box. You won't need any specialist tools, either. Besides a decent quality soldering iron and a circuit tester, the only unusual tools you'll really need are a step cutter to make the potentiometer, switch and jack holes and a Q-Max punch to make holes for the XLR sockets – and our three projects this month will definitely make buying those two well worth your trouble.

1 PICKUP SIMULATOR

Vintage-style fuzz circuits don't always 'play nice' with other stompboxes on your pedal board. Those old fuzz circuits were designed to be connected straight to a guitar, and running them with other pedals preceding them in the signal path can compromise performance.

Things are particularly bad with old-style wah pedals that don't have buffered outputs. A buffer is an effective fix for noise and reduced wah range, but a vintage-style fuzz will respond differently with a buffer preceding it. It's fine when your guitar's volume is fully up, but part of the charm of Fuzz Faces and the like is the way they respond when you back off your volume. Fuzz pedals love complex, ever-shifting, high impedance guitar outputs; when they see the stable, low impedance output of a buffer instead, then guitar volume adjustments won't produce the same response and the sound may be harsh, thin and disjointed when you clean up.

We recently stumbled across an article by Jack Orman (www.muzique.com/labs/pickups/htm) where he shows how a very small and cheap transformer can be used to trick fuzzboxes into thinking they're connected directly to a guitar – even if they're being fed by a buffered pedal. So we thought it was worth trying out.

DC resistance is usually quoted in pickup reviews and readers are generally left to make assumptions about sonic implications. This is misleading because (leaving pickup construction aside) guitar circuits are way more complex than that – they're reactive rather than purely resistive. You have to consider the inductance and resistance of the pickups, the resistance from the control pots, and the capacitance from the tone circuit and the guitar cable. Things are not constant across the entire frequency range, and all kinds of resonances are involves. Orman uses a Mouser 42TL019 transformer to provide resistance and inductance. Remember that, like guitar pickups, coils of wire are wrapped around magnets to make transformers. Orman doesn't use the transformer in a conventional way, because he ignores the secondary completely. Instead he uses the three primary connections to provide inductance and some resistance – with a two-way switch to mimic single coils or humbuckers. Next a 25K pot is added to mimic pickup resistance. Most pickups are in the 5K to 12K range, so the 25K pot is ideal for impedance adjustment. Lastly he adds a 330pF capacitor to bleed off some of the treble content – just like the capacitance of a typical guitar cable. The capacitor also interacts with the pot resistance to create a resonant peak at the cutoff frequency.

The transformer needed for this project is so small that you could easily build this circuit into the battery compartment of a pedal, but if you have more than one fuzz that could benefit, you might prefer to build it in a separate box. Adding a treble cut on/off switch was our only modification from the original plan.

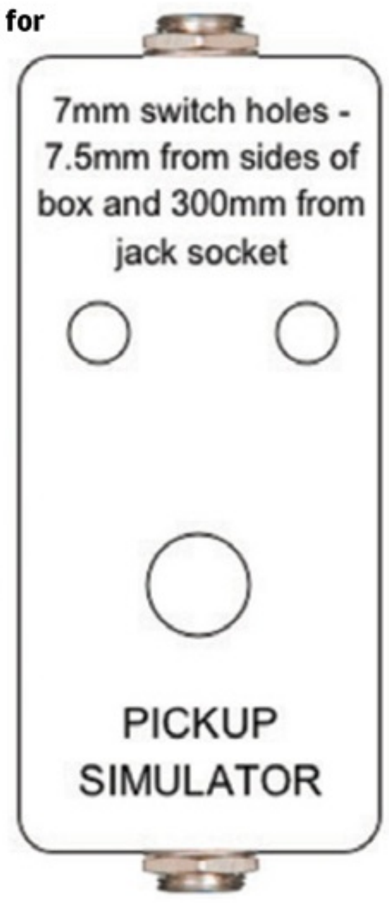
To test whether the simulation circuit degraded the sound in any way, we put it in line with no other pedals and switched it in and out using our DIY looper. We couldn't hear any difference whatsoever – and that's exactly what we wanted.

The box has a subtle but undeniably beneficial influence. Fuzz tones are noticeably smoother, fuller and clearer. With backed-off volume the decay is more even, with reduced spittiness and intermodular distortion. We also got great results combining overdrive pedals with fuzzboxes.

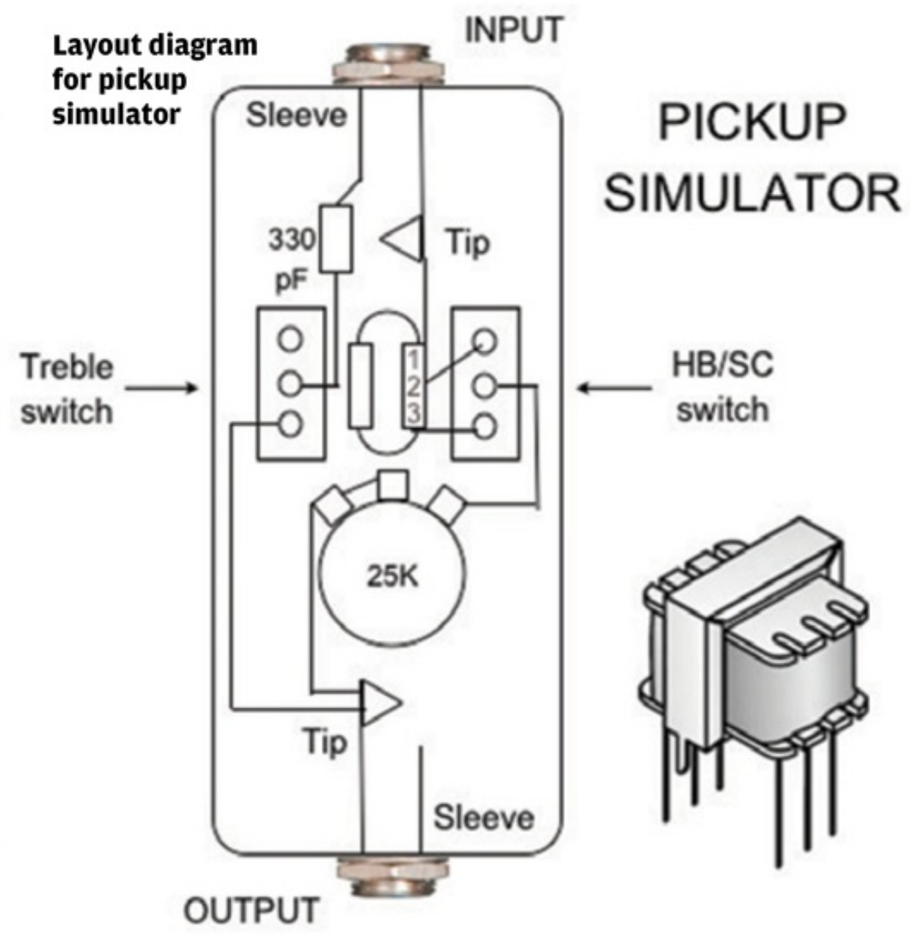
You can try different treble bleed capacitors depending on the characteristics of your guitar and amp. Orman suggests that 330pF creates a 5.6kHz resonance peak in conjunction with the 25K pot. Higher cap values lower the resonance frequency, while lower cap values raise it. Values to experiment with may include 220pF and 470pF.

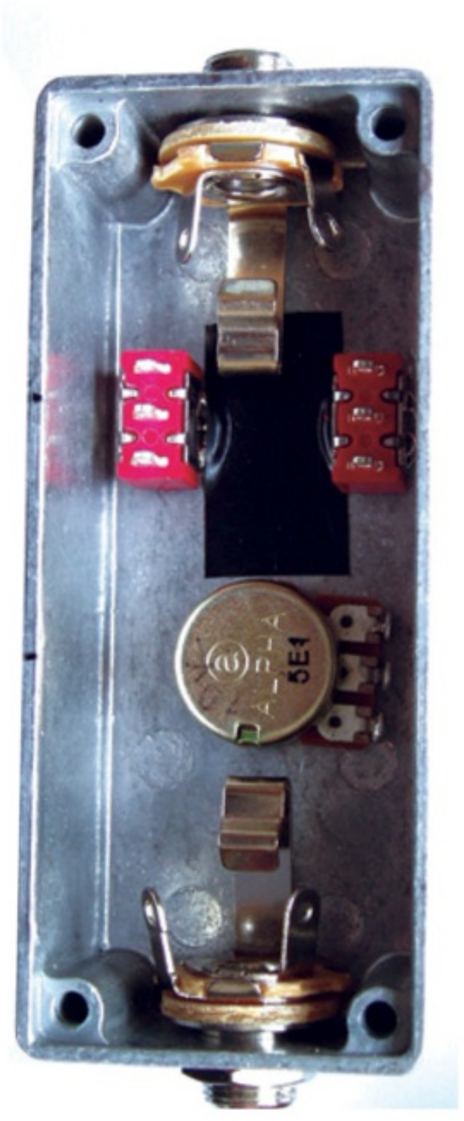
Why not install an on/off/on switch? That way you could have two different cutoff frequencies or bypass the treble roll off altogether – maybe replacing the cable simulating capacitor with a real cable. Lastly, that single coil/humbucker switch does nothing to the signal level, but it noticeably thickens up the tone in HB mode and provides more focus and sparkle in SC mode. If you check out Orman's article, he also shows a more complex circuit that gets even closer to the output circuitry of a guitar.

Box diagram for pickup simulator

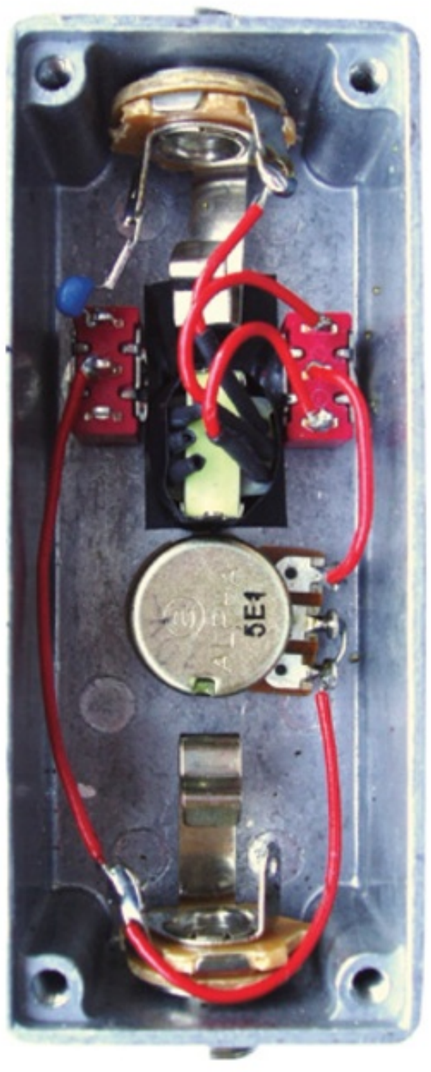


Layout diagram for pickup simulator



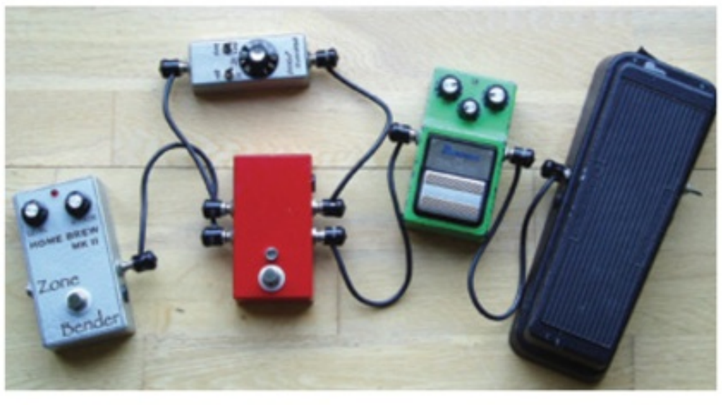


Hardware installed in pickup simulator box prior to hooking up. The area between the two switches is covered in insulation tape



Transformer is wrapped in insulation tape and all the components are connected up

Our completed pickup simulator. We thought it would be funky with an old amp knob. 'Z' stands for impedance



Here's our setup for testing the pickup simulator. The wah and the Tubescreamer both have buffered outputs. The red looper switches the pickup simulator in and out of the signal path feeding our Tone Bender clone

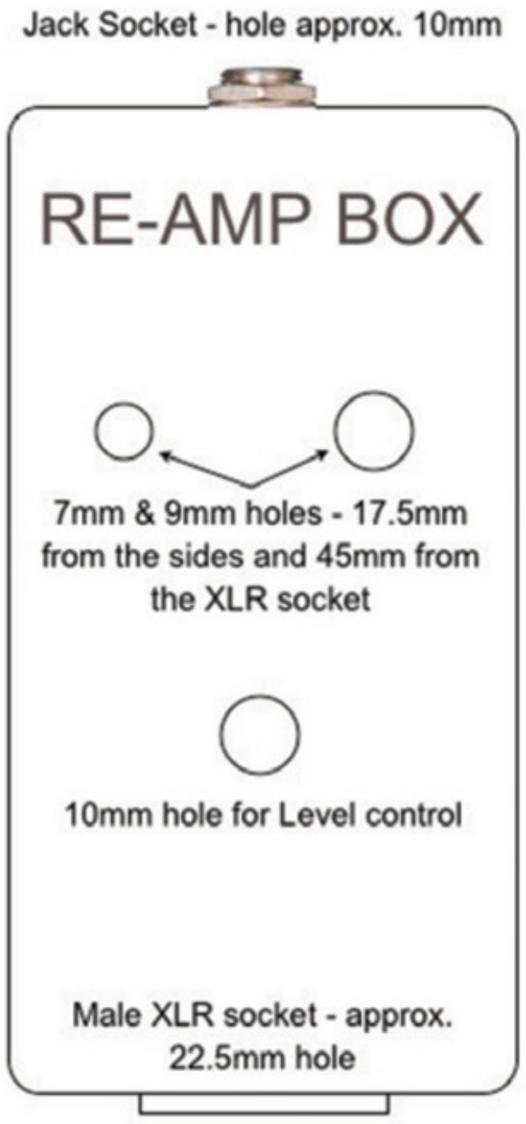
2 RE-AMP BOX

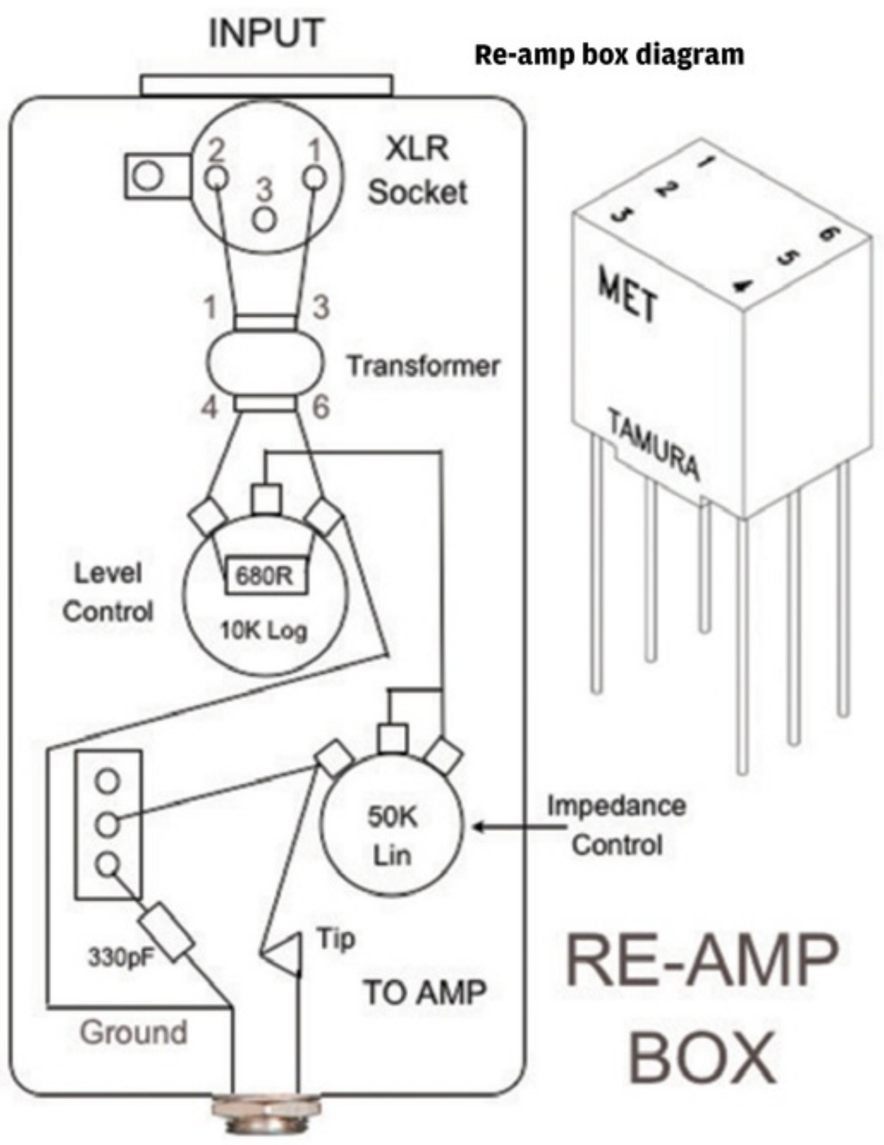
You may have heard of 're-amping' and wondered what it means. It refers to the process of recording super-clean direct guitar and bass sounds and then later playing the DI'd signal back through an amp to re-record the sound properly. Recording direct ensures that you won't experience any spill issues when a band is recording in one room, or when you're recording a live show. You can record at home when you like, monitoring through a digital modeller or small amp, then nail your tones when you're able to crank up your amp. So long as you keep your DI track, you can change your mind and re-record the sound as many times as you like.

Sadly, though, it's not quite as simple connecting output of your soundcard directly to an amp. Doing so will probably cause a loud ground loop hum; both the amp and the soundcard will be earthed, so loops are inevitable. Then there's the problem of impedance. The soundcard will have low impedance, balanced output, while the amp will be expecting a high impedance, unbalanced source – like a guitar. The soundcard will also be generating a line level signal exceeding the level of the hottest pickups.

The answer is a re-amping box. This box will break the ground loop, sort out the unbalanced/balanced and impedance issues, and attenuate the signal to a workable level. In other words, it tricks the amp into thinking its talking to a guitar rather than a computer.

There are numerous commercially available re-amping boxes including the Little Labs Multi Z PIP and well-regarded Reamp V2. Alternatively, you can build your own. We decided to adapt the circuit published by audio guru Scott Dorsey in *Recording Magazine*. If you want to check out the original, go to. http://www.recordingmag.com/resources/resourceDetail/314.html).





Re-amp box diagram

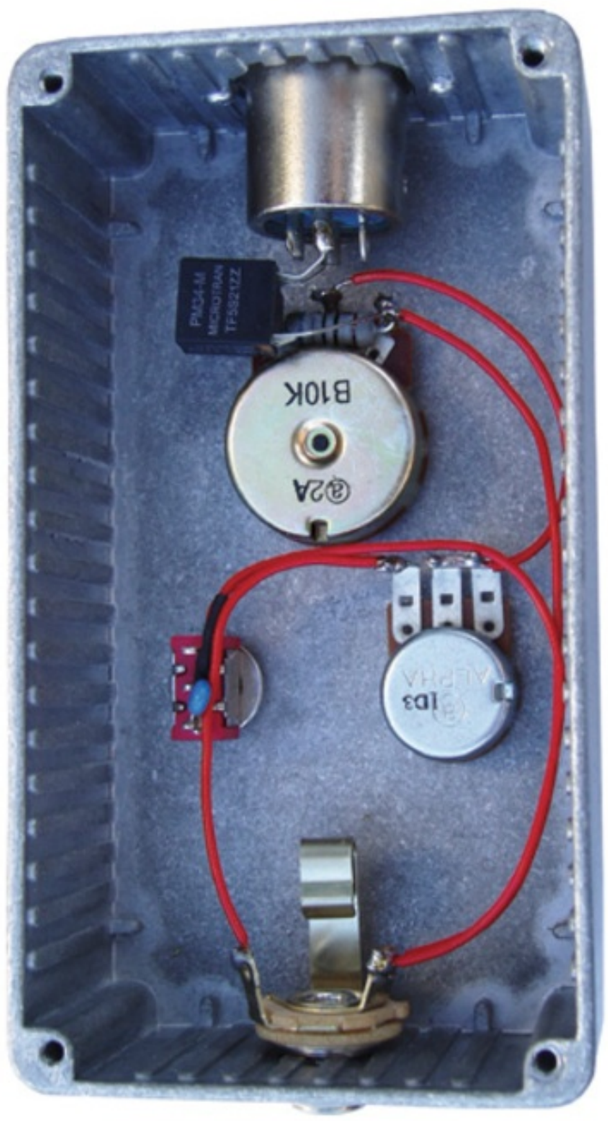
Most re-amp projects feature specialised and expensive transformers, but Dorsey's version is tbased on an inexpensive 600:600 mini transformer. The transformer removes the potential for ground loops by electronically isolating the amp from the soundcard. A 680 Ohm resister is strapped across the secondary of the transformer to load it properly, then a 10K log potentiometer serves as a level control to feed a 10K resistor. Dorsey's version features a switch to toggle between a 1M resistor and a 0.1 Henry inductor to simulate the response of different types of pickup.

Emboldened by our success with the pickup simulator box, we replaced the 10K resistor with a linear 50K pot so we could set impedance by ear. We couldn't find a UK supplier offering a reasonably-priced 0.1H inductor, so we didn't bother with that, but we added a switchable treble cut capacitor instead. Check out Dorsey's version, but bear in mind that the transformer he specifies is no longer available. There are also apparent errors on the published diagrams regarding the transformer connections.

No circuit boards are necessary; we wired up our box point-to-point. The transformer legs are stiff enough to hold it in position, and the only audio sockets we used were a male XLR and a mono 1/4" jack. You could use a TRS jack socket to connect to your soundcard cable instead.

This box works like a charm, although it is disconcerting when a guitar sound comes through your amp when there's nobody playing! We kept the send level in our DAW high to maintain a good signal-to-noise ratio, and the box's level control attenuated the signal reaching the amp without changing the tone. You can hit the amp as hard or softly as you like – so single coils can have the power of a hot humbucker, or you can drop the level for a range of clean tones that you can't usually get with humbuckers. The impedance control has a very subtle influence on frequency response, and if you want to get really picky, you might try placing the pickup simulator box between the re-amp box and the amplifier.

A close-up of the Tamura transformer hardwired to the XLR socket and the Level control pot. Note the 680 Ohm resistor strapped across the outer tags of the pot



Above: hardware installed in the re-amp box awaiting hookup. Right: this is how the re-amp box looks from the outside

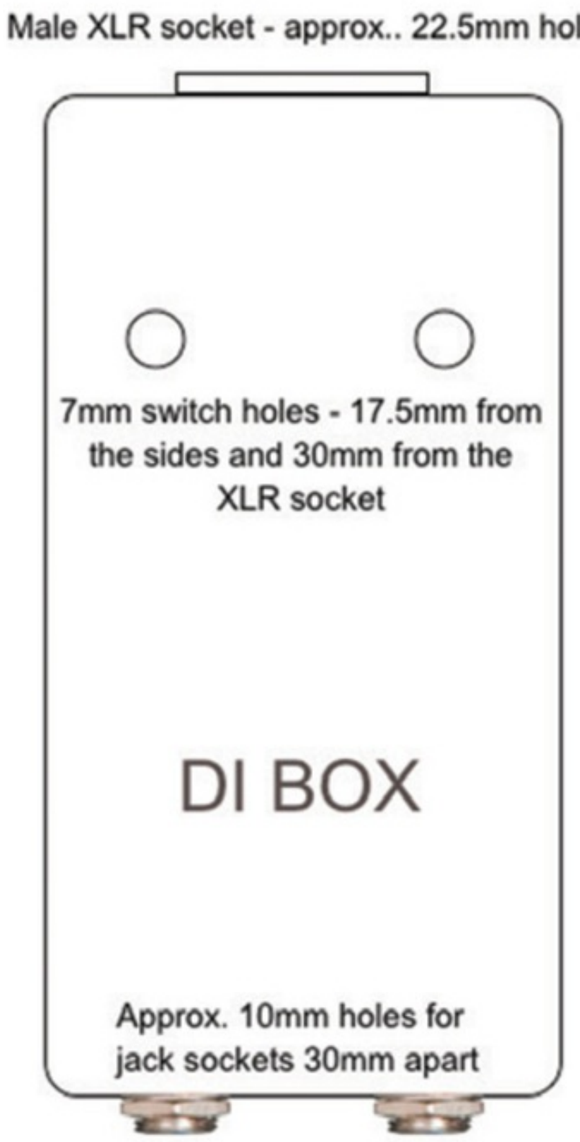
3 PASSIVE DI BOX

Many of us will be familiar with DI boxes from gigging and recording, even if we've never been entirely sure what they actually do. Companies like Sansamp and Behringer specialise in building these useful pieces of kit. They're commonly used for basses and electro-acoustic guitars on stage. The instrument is plugged into the DI box and another cable is taken from the link output to the amp – but the really important signal exits via an XLR socket.

Passive DI boxes employ a transformer for two main reasons. The transformer presents the instrument with a high impedance input, then converts the signal from high to low impedance and from unbalanced to balanced. In other words, DI boxes perform the trick of fooling microphone preamps into thinking that guitars and basses are actually microphones.

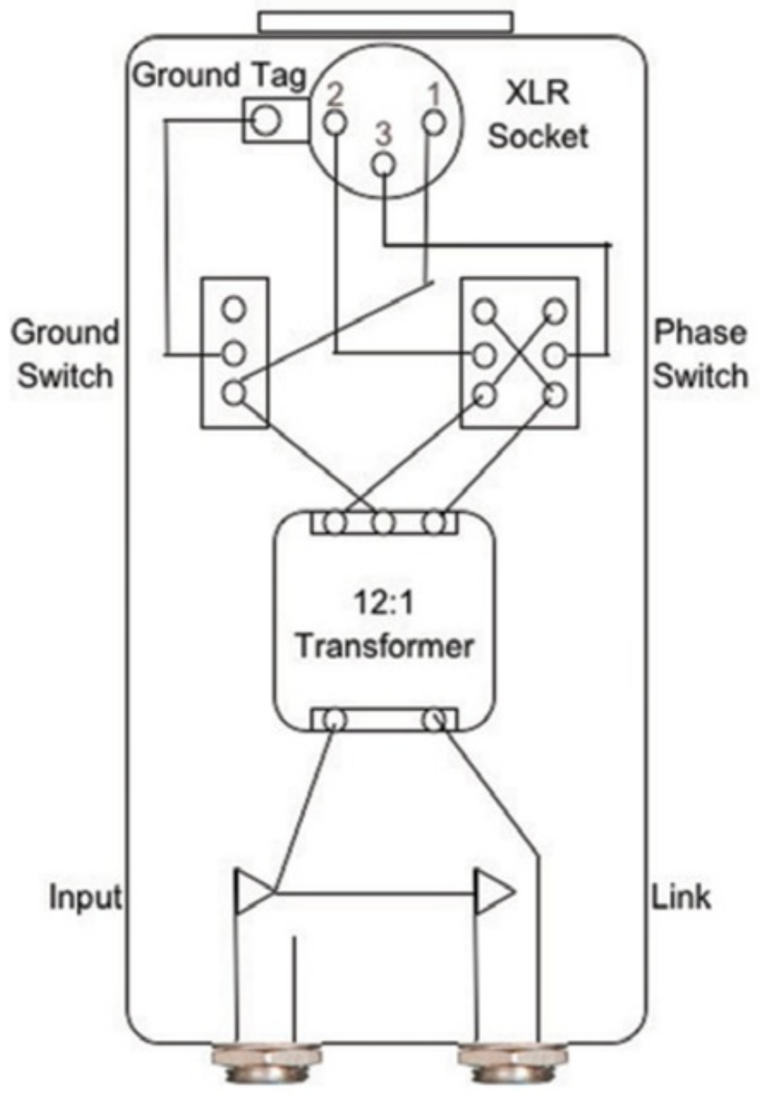
Low impedance signals are preferred for long cable runs and balancing the signal means that any noise picked up by the cable can be cancelled out by the mixing desk/microphone preamp. Other common features include a switch for breaking ground loops and an attenuation pad.

We used the new Carnhill VTB9072 transformer from Audio Maintenance (www.audiomaintenance.com) – the same people who supply the transformers used in the legendary Neve microphone preamps. This 12:1 ratio transformer is very similar to the Jensen



JT-DB-E transformer used in Radial's famous passive DI box. If you visit Jensen's website (www.jensen-transformers.com) you can even find various schematics for passive DI boxes.

DI Box layout diagram



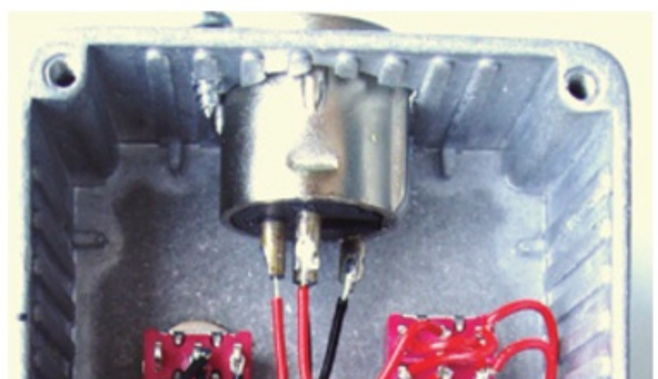
Whatever transformer you choose, ensure you follow the manufacturer's instructions for wiring and fixing to the box.

The only controls are a ground lift switch and a polarity (phase) flip. The latter may be useful if you're mic'ing the amp and taking a direct signal simultaneously. Audio Maintenance also suggested trying a 680pF capacitor across the transformer outputs if you detect any high frequency ringing.

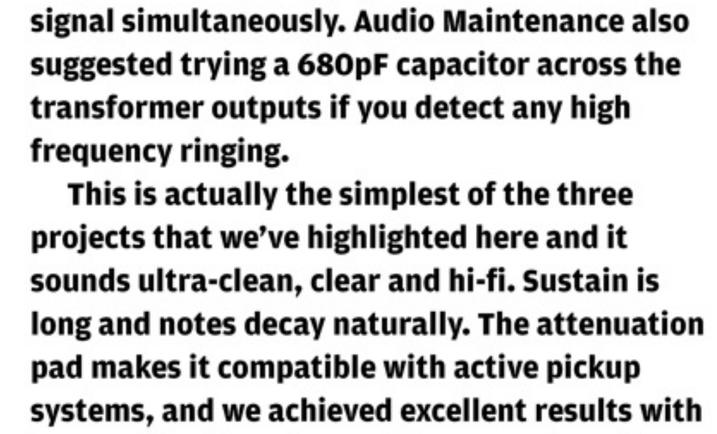
This is actually the simplest of the three projects that we've highlighted here and it sounds ultra-clean, clear and hi-fi. Sustain is long and notes decay naturally. The attenuation pad makes it compatible with active pickup systems, and we achieved excellent results with bass and keyboards as well as acoustic and electric guitars.

It would be hard to beat for squeaky-clean 1980s-style electric guitar tones, especially with a liberal dose of compression, and it's ideal for getting a pure signals onto your hard drive prior to re-amping. Bassists can pop one into their gig bags to ensure that they're always sending a top quality sound to the PA mixer.

DI box components ready to be connected up. The Carnhill transformer we used is designed to be held to the side wall of the box by two small screws



Above: here's the DI box connected up and ready to use. Right: our completed passive DI box, with minimalist DIY chic



Verdict

All three of these projects are relatively easy; in fact you might find the metal work is probably the hardest part. We didn't bother with fancy graphics or painting the boxes, but a few hours with some spray cans and Letraset labels might produce some very boutique and professional-looking results. Best of all, there are no lethal voltages involved – just try not to burn your fingers on your soldering iron.

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Mark Knopfler

Dire Straits' classic *Brothers In Arms* showed Knopfler returning to simpler songwriting and subtle guitar parts. **Douglas Noble** examines the best bits

Fleet-fingered country-rock stylist Mark Knopfler has one of the most subtle yet recognisable guitar voices of the past 30 years – and one lesser-recognised but key element of his sound is the fact that he is left-handed, but plays a right-handed guitar. 'My strong hand is on the fretboard,' he explains. 'That makes for a good vibrato. I can pull or bend three strings quite easily.'

One other major element to his technique is of course that, rather like Jeff Beck, he plucks the strings with his fingers rather than a plectrum. Knopfler typically lightly rests his ring finger on the top of the guitar just below the top string with the pinky of his plucking hand beside it, and picks the strings with his thumb, index and middle fingers – a hand position which can be seen in many YouTube clips. 'It's all the thumb and first two fingers,' he man himself reveals. 'I tend to anchor with the back of my hand and my other two fingers, so it's a solid base.'

Knopfler's musical sensitivity is demonstrated by the fact that his songwriting is affected by the actual key of a song. 'Different keys on the guitar suggest different moods. I can't get any height on my voice so I tend to choose keys that might not suit the song but happen to suit my nonexistent range – I'm a bit limited that way,' he says.

'I've always liked F and D minor – they're basically the same thing. Sometimes you pick the wrong key when you're recording – *Why Worry* was recorded in E, and you can hear it's wrong. I'm straining to sing it. I think on the last tour we changed it to D.' The song *Brothers In Arms* makes use of the open E chord in the key of G# minor; see Exercise 4.

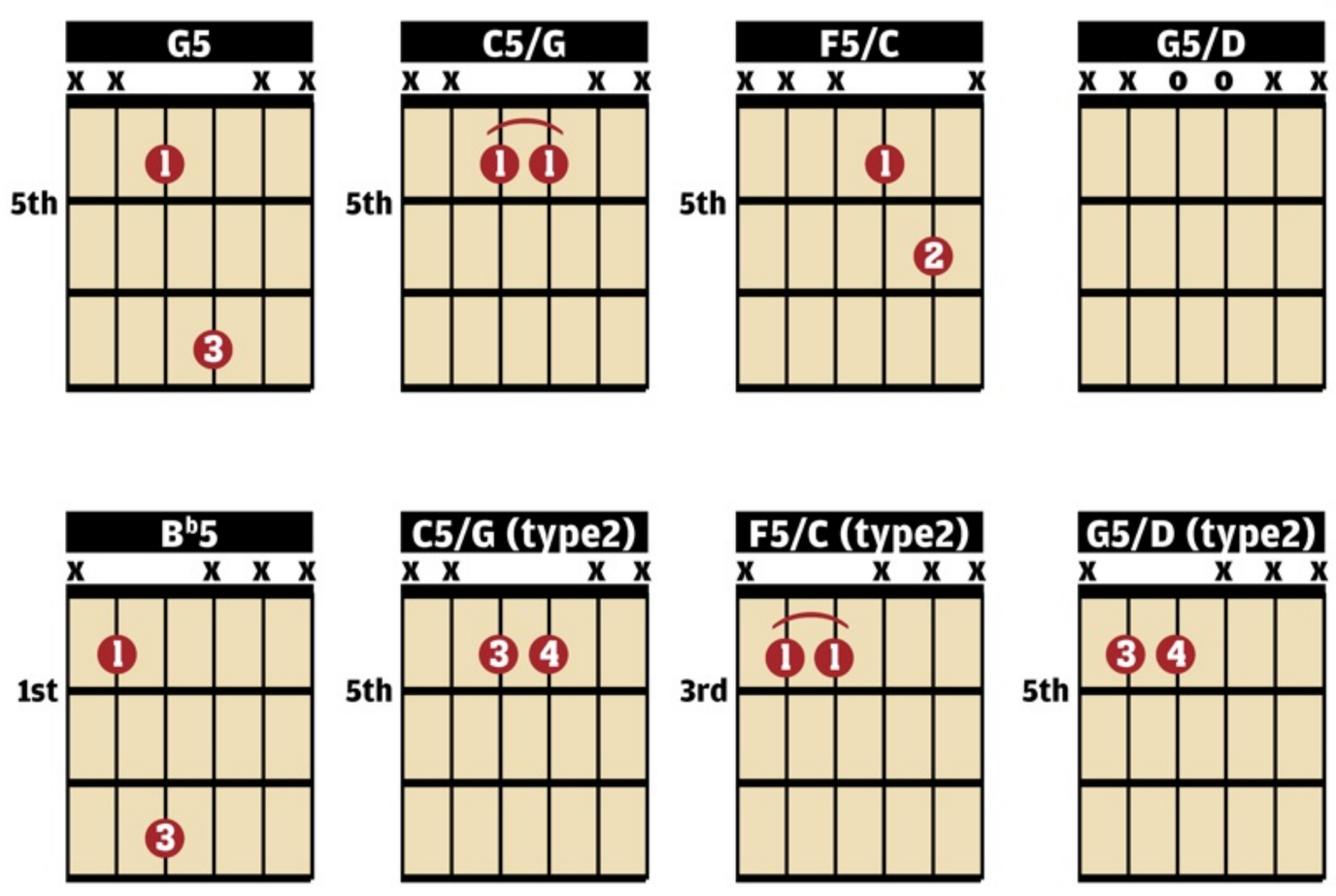
The keys of F and D minor might be Knopfler's favourites, but only one song on *Brothers In Arms* is in either of these keys – the acoustic *The Man's Too Strong*, which is in D minor. The most common key is E major which is used for *So Far Away, Walk of Life, Your Latest Trick* and the aforementioned *Why Worry*.

One final, unusual fact about *Brothers In Arms*: 'I was getting tired of this rather silly quest in the studio for a good snare sound, so as it turned out, there five songs on there with no snare drum at all!'

1 TWO-NOTE CHORDS

The distinctive guitar riff of *Money For Nothing* that kicks in at 1:36 is based on chords consisting of just two notes, or 'diads'. On initial hearing, and trying to work the riff out with a guitar in hand, it may seem as if Knopfler is playing the riff at the bottom of the fretboard, whereas he is actually playing the start of the riff in the fifth position (first finger at the fifth fret), starting with the G5 shown in the first diagram. The riff consists of the root-fifth power chord shape, as shown in this G5 diagram and also used for Bb5, and the inverted version of this chord, consisting of fifth/root; this is used for the C5/G, F5/C, G5/D, C5/G (type 2), F5/C and G5/D (type 2) voicings.

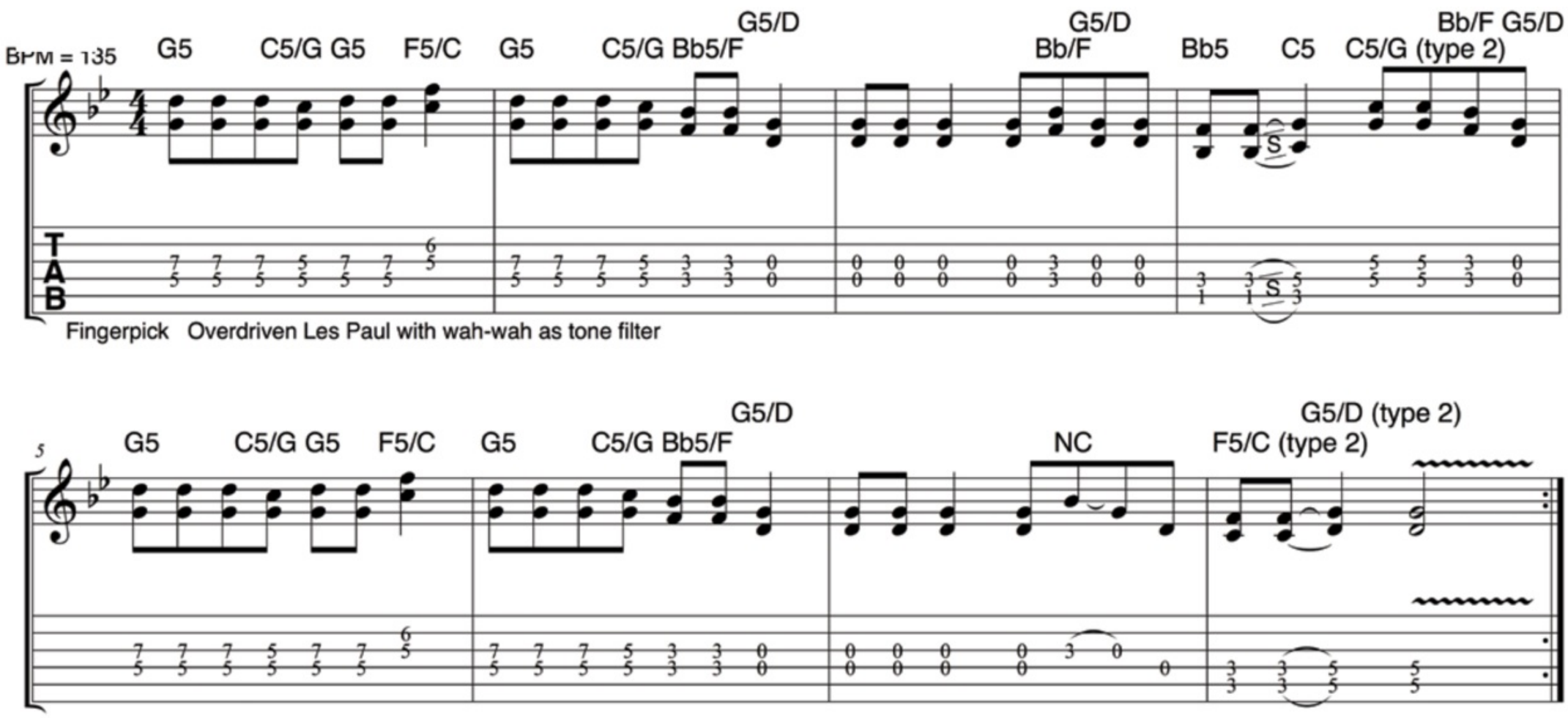
G5/D and G5/D (type 2) consist of the same notes, but played in different places and with different fingering; similarly for C5/G and C5/G (type 2). F5/C and F5/C (type 2) are essentially the same chord but the latter is one octave lower than the first.



2 MONEY FOR NOTHING-STYLE RIFF — 4/4 TIME

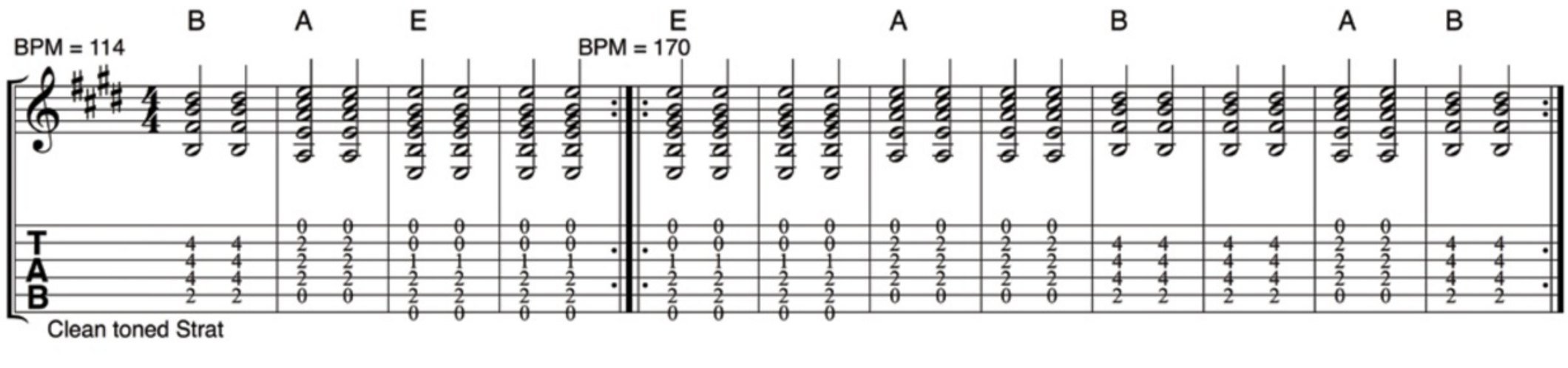
Using the chord shapes from Ex 1, this riff is similar to the main riff of *Money For Nothing*, first heard at 1:36. In bar 2, Bb/F is C5/G from Ex 1 moved two frets lower; similarly, in bar 4, C5 is Bb5 from Ex 1 played two frets higher. The exercise ends with a hammer-on from F5/C, barred with finger one, to G5/D, fingered with fingers three and four.

Knopfler explains the inspiration behind this riff: 'It's partly the way I play – that-two-strings-at-once kind of thing... that's a lick I could put into a whole bunch of R&B tunes, and it would fit right in.' Curiously, due to a freak of finger placement and the tone with which Knopfler plays the intro, he sets off a couple of presumably unintentional natural harmonics, albeit heard fleetingly. These can be heard at 1:42 and 1:46 – listen closely!



3 I, IV & V PROGRESSIONS — 4/4 TIME

Much of the *Brothers In Arms* album was a conscious attempt to get away from the longer, more complex song structures on Dire Strait's previous project, *Love Over Gold*. Consequently, *Walk of Life, So Far Away* and *Why Worry* are all based on chords I, IV and V in the key of E – that is, chords E, A and B, so no need for chord diagrams here! You ought to know E and A, but make sure that you finger B with the first finger on the fifth string, second fret, and the third finger lying flat across strings four, three and two at the fourth fret. This exercise is a two-for-one deal: the first four bars are similar to the basic chord structure of *So Far Away*; bars 5 to 12 outline the intro progression of *Walk Of Life*.



MARK KNOPFLER'S EQUIPMENT

Knopfler's trademark tone is a clean Fender Strat sound. His main instrument from the late '70s was a red Schecter with maple neck and maple fretboard, and he used it for his signature song *Sultans Of Swing* from Dire Straits' 1978 eponymous debut.

On *Brothers On Arms* Knopfler played another solidbody copy, a red two-pickup Schecter, on *Walk Of Life* – this guitar, he feels, has a particularly good sound for rhythm guitar work. For the title track and *Money For Nothing* he used a 1984 Les Paul reissue. The highly distinctive sound for the guitar riff of *Money For Nothing* was shaped by using a wah-wah in a fixed position for that 'nasal' sound, and played through a Marshall JTM45.

By the time of *Brothers In Arms* Knopfler had an impressive array of modern and vintage guitars and amplification, but guitar tech Ron Eve commented: 'Mark is pretty much a basic reverb and basic echo type of man.' The famous album cover of *Brothers In Arms* shows Knopfler's 1939 National Duolian resonator held up agaianst the Montserrat sky. The National was used to record *Romeo And Juliet* and *Telegraph Road* from the fourth album, *Love Over Gold*.

4 USE OF THE E CHORD IN THE KEY OF Ab

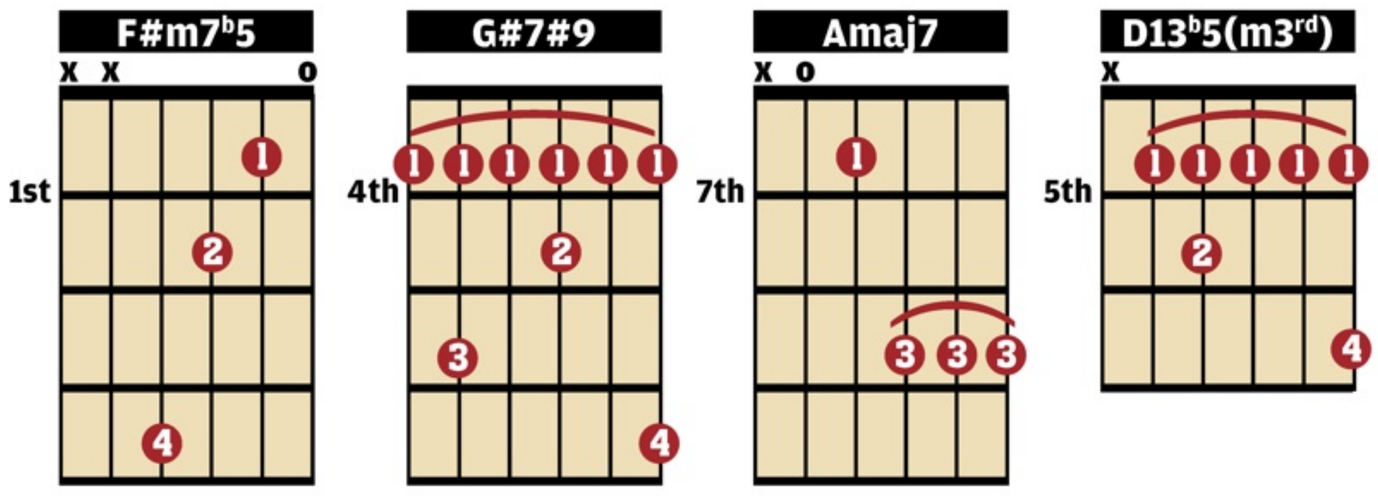
4/4 TIME

'Sometimes a key will free a chord to sound differently from how it normally would,' Knopfler once mused. 'The song *Brothers In Arms* is in Ab, which opens up a nice E chord.' *Brothers In Arms* is actually in the key of G# minor rather than A flat, but a songwriter as skilled as Knopfler can perhaps be spared the music theory pedantry! So, here's an exercise that illustrates how the basic open E chord sounds and feels in G# minor.

Bars 1 and 3 start with barré G#m chords at the fourth fret, followed by Knopfler-esque *Brothers In Arms*-style fills, leading to a basic open E chord. This open E with its three open strings at the bottom of the fretboard has a unique resonance on the guitar – but listen, as Knopfler says, to how the chord sounds 'differently' here where it is functioning as chord bVII in a minor key from how it sounds in Ex 3, where it is functioning as chord I in the key of E major.

5 JAZZ CHORDS

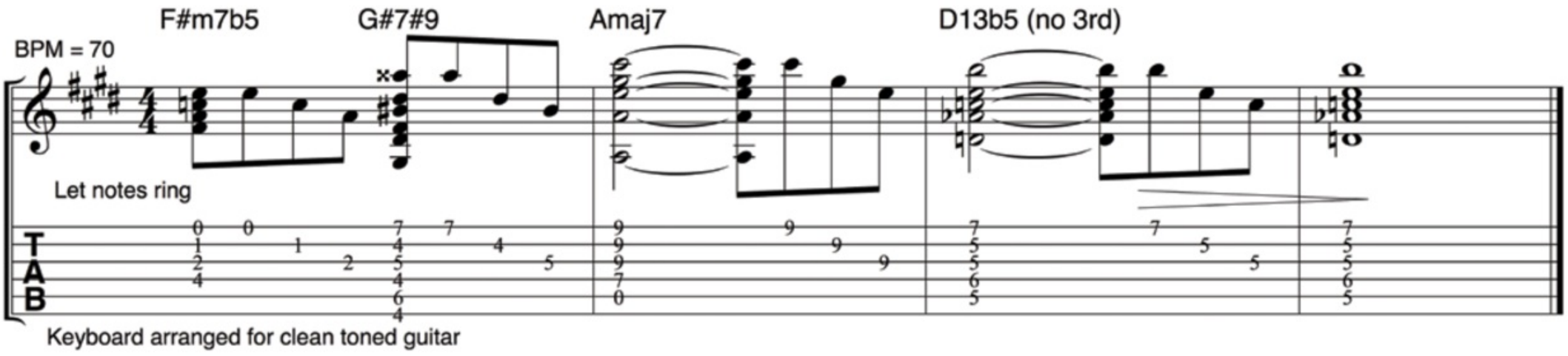
Knopfler has always drawn from a wide range of influences including rock'n'roll, jazz, blues and country. The rock'n'roll and blues influence can be seen in the use of chords I, IV and V in Ex 3; the jazz influence can be heard in some of the keyboard chords in *Your Latest Trick*, some of which are arranged here for guitar. The notes that make up F#m7b5 are played in this chord in strict ascending order – root, minor third, diminished fifth and minor seventh. G#7#9 is the basic E7 chord barred at the fourth fret with the addition of the fourth finger on the top string, seventh fret. The use of open A at the bottom of this Amaj7 voicing means this voicing covers a wide span. D13b5 is a harmonically rich chord, ideally consisting of root, third, diminished fifth, minor seventh, ninth and thirteenth – it's very tricky to play all these notes at the same time on the guitar, so in this voicing the third is omitted, hence the name D13b5 (no 3rd).



6 YOUR LATEST TRICK-STYLE PROGRESSION

4/4 TIME

This exercise uses the chords from Ex 5 in a progression similar to the keyboard part in *Your Latest Trick* at 0:52. As indicated in the music, hold down the chord shapes and let the notes ring on. In the exercise, the chord is struck and then the top three strings are played one at a time, in order to get a feel for the chords and the progression; feel free to improvise variations on this.



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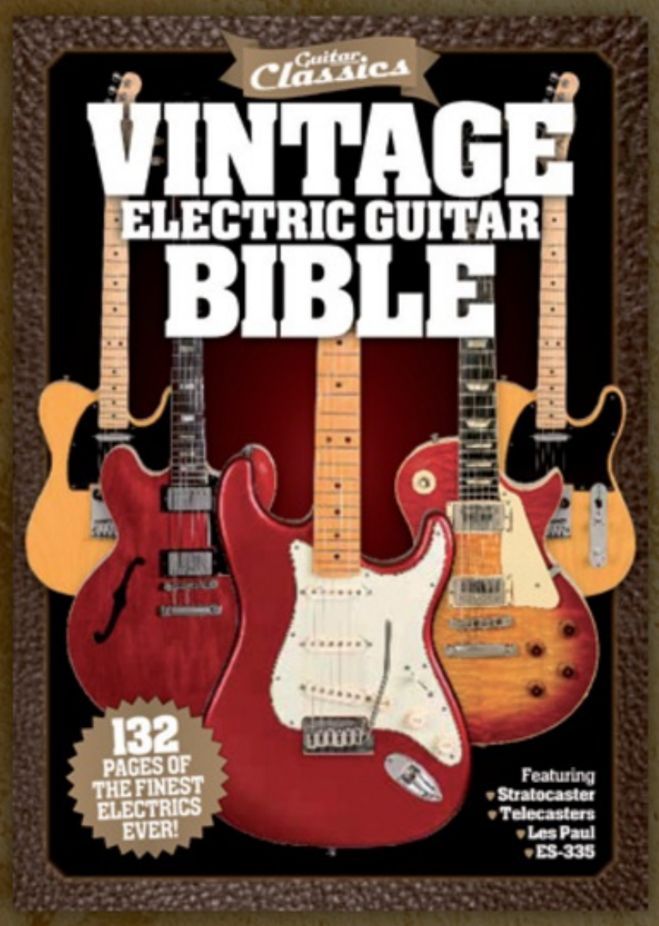

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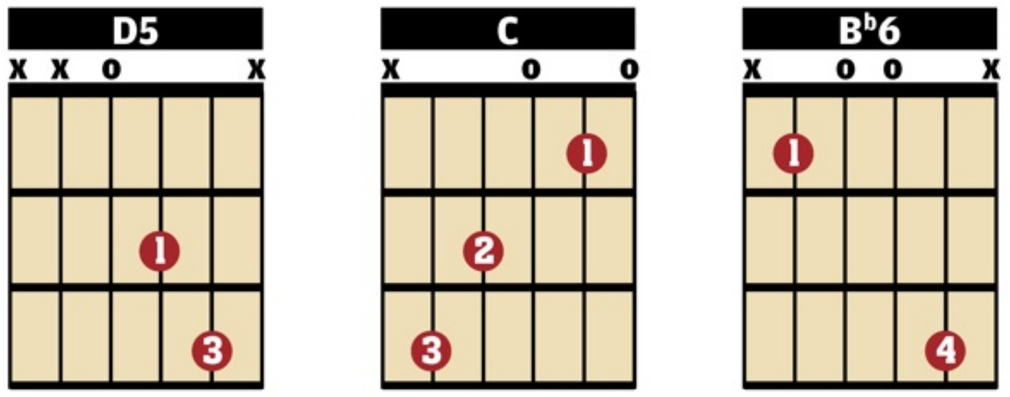
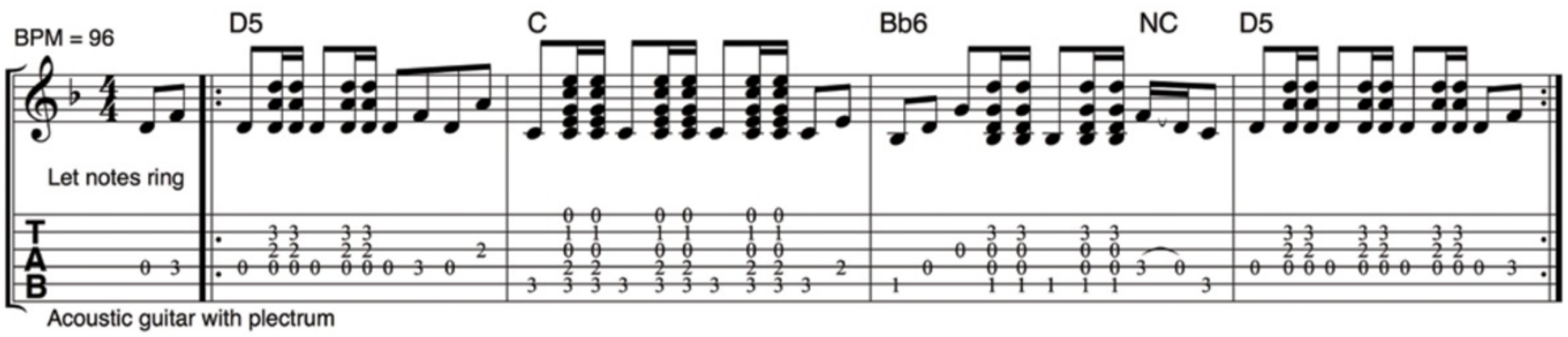
7 D5, C AND Bb6 CHORDS

This voicing of D5 is simply the basic open D chord but without the note on the top string. This leaves the second finger free for bass notes, as at the start of Exercise 8. The C chord here is the basic open voicing, while the third chord, Bb6, makes use of the middle two strings played open flanked by two fretted notes. This could also be thought of as Gm with Bb in the bass, or Gm/Bb – both chords contain the same notes, with the chord's context determining the name of the chord.



8 THE MAN'S TOO STRONG-TYPE PROGRESSION — 4/4 TIME

Played on acoustic guitar, *The Man's Too Strong* starts with a progression based on Im, bVII and bVI in the key of D minor, which gives us the chords Dm, C and Bb. Knopfler's signature song *Sultans Of Swing* makes extensive use of these chords on electric guitar. However, in *The Man's Too Strong*, Knopfler plays D5 instead of Dm using the voicing we saw in Exercise 7, leaving the second finger free for bass notes. Knopfler plays chord bVI as bVI6, or Bb6, as shown in Exercise 7. Live, he played this on an Ovation acoustic – with a plectrum. 'I still use a plectrum now and again for strumming or for playing on acoustic tracks.'



9 DOUBLE STOP LICKS AND VOLUME SWELL EFFECTS — 4/4 TIME

The song *Brothers In Arms* is full of tasteful licks. The first two bars are a meaty double-stop lick similar to the one at 2:14, followed at 2:18 by a simple three-note phrase made gorgeous by violin-type volume swells. The swells are shown by the 'hairpin' signs – turn down the volume control of the guitar then pluck the required note or hammer-on to it, then turn up the volume. The entry of the lead guitar in *Your Latest Trick* uses volume swells at 0:31. Knopfler generally uses an Ernie Ball volume pedal to get these types of effects.

10 NATURAL MINOR LICKS — 4/4 TIME

The outro solo of *Brothers In Arms* uses the G# natural minor scale (G#, A#, B, C#, D#, E, F#, G#), as shown in the first four bars below. This solo, starting at 4:49, is a great example of Knopfler's growing restraint in his lead playing. In contrast, earlier in his career, the outro of *Sultans Of Swing* featured some very flashy fretwork, including the ascending set of arpeggios that follow the chords at 5:18. Perhaps thanks to his maturity (Knopfler was 35 when he recorded it) or perhaps because he was playing for the song, the lead guitar on the title track of *Brothers In Arms* shows a good deal of laid-back taste. Bars 5 and 6 show a couple of phrases similar to those in this solo.

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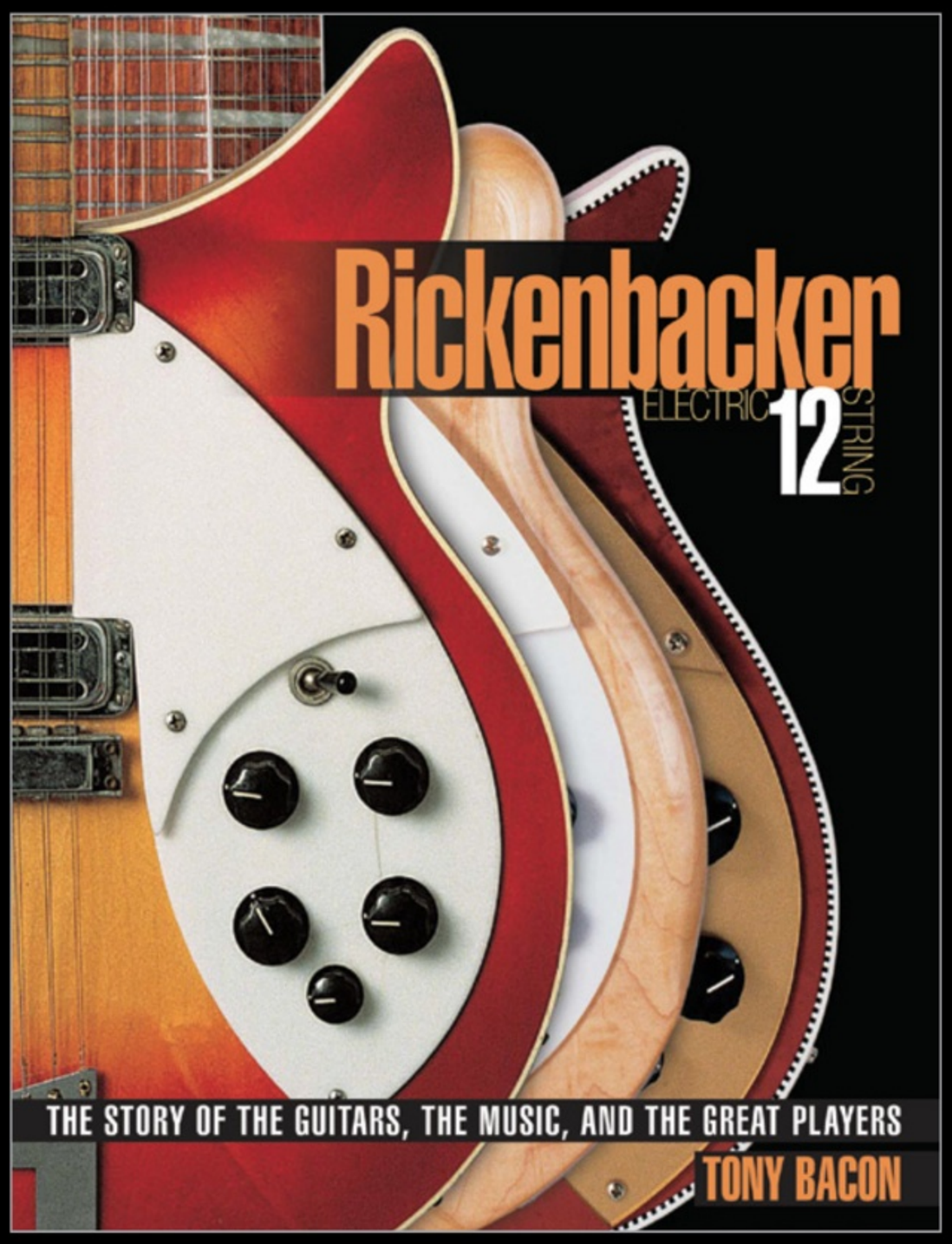

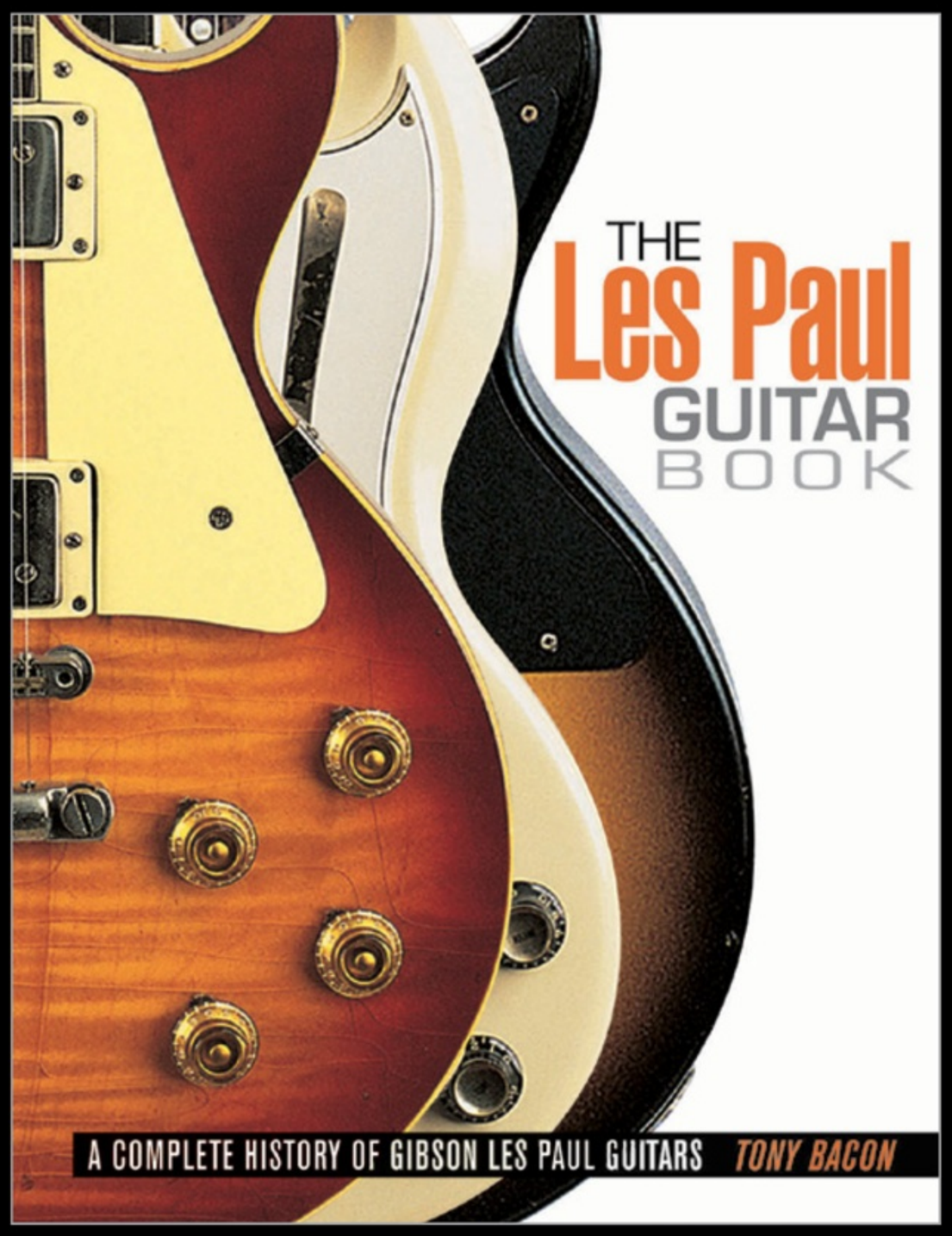

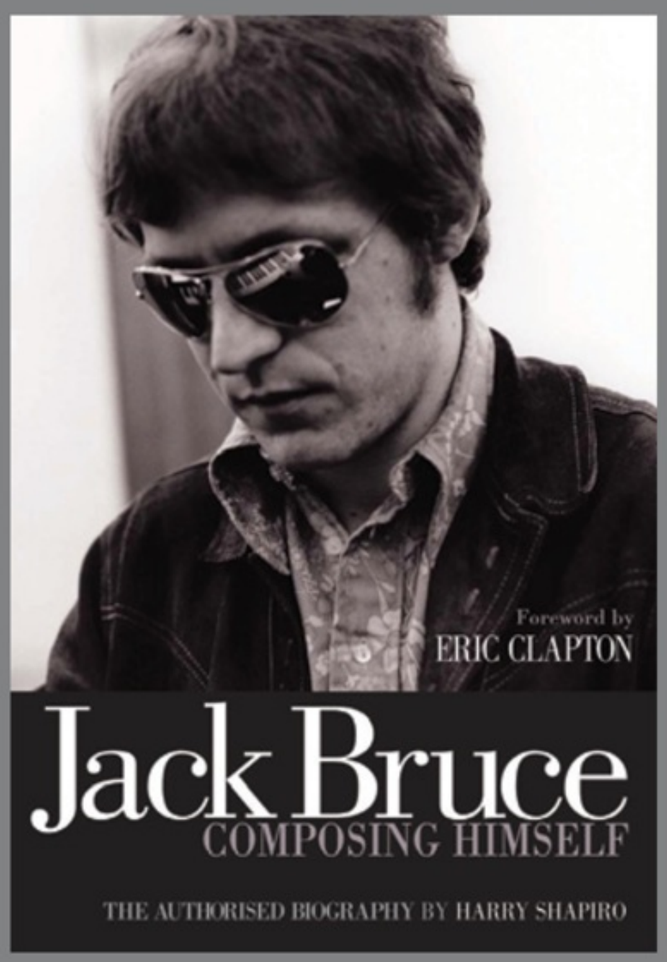

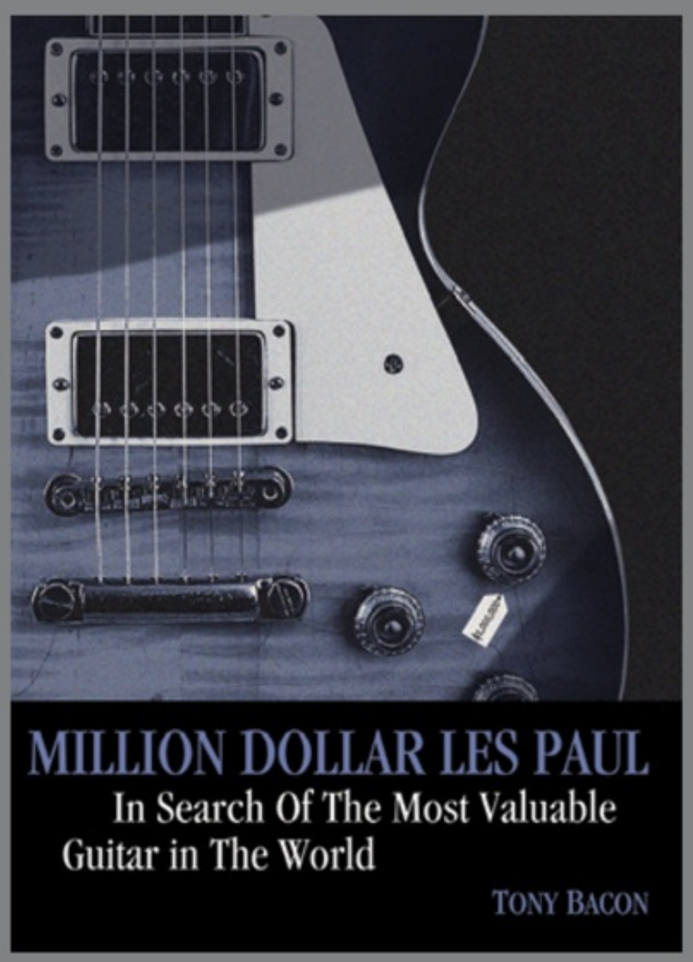

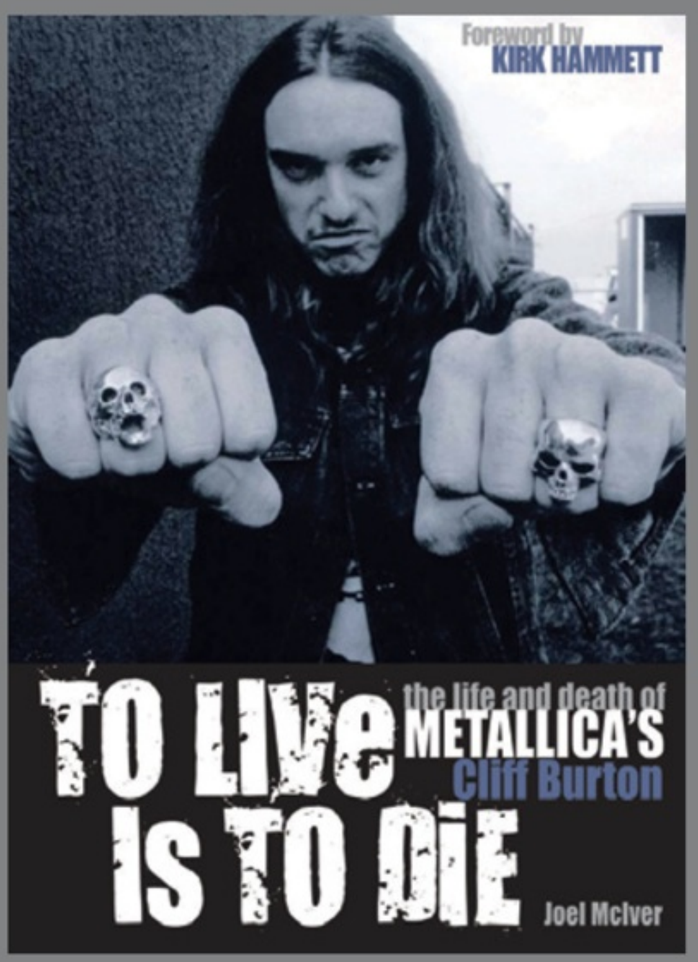

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Ozzy Osbourne's first post-Sabbath album *Blizzard Of Ozz* was made with a dream band and a bassist who played out of his skin. **Gareth Morgan** looks back at a heavy rock standard

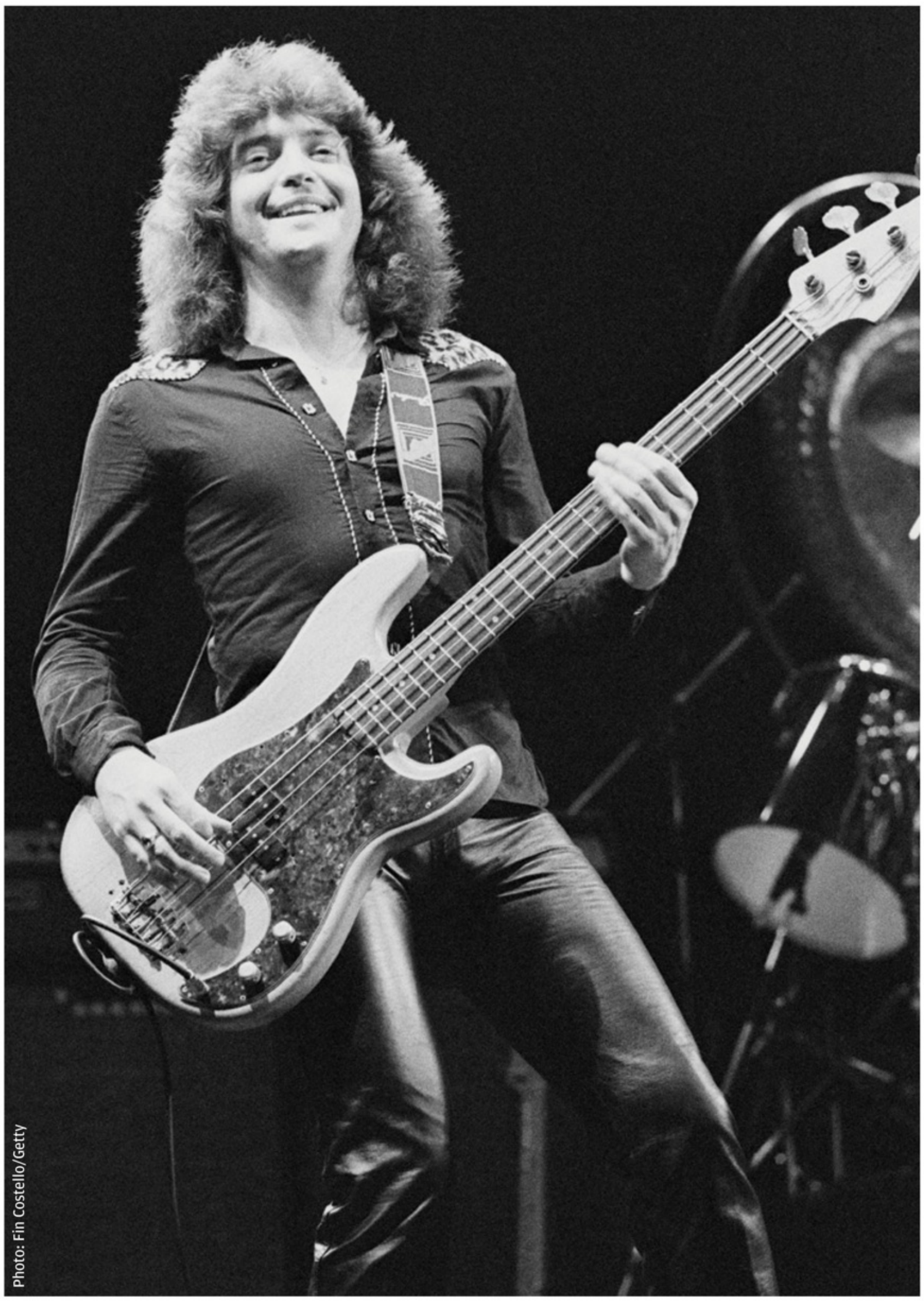


Photo: Fin Costello/Getty

The first album recorded by Ozzy Osbourne after being ejected from Black Sabbath was *Blizzard Of Ozz*. Initially intended as a band project, Osbourne's record company Jet altered the album's front cover, giving the singer's name more prominence and making it appear to all intents and purposes like a solo album.

The band that had come together to record *Blizzard* comprised legendary guitarist Randy Rhoads, ex-Uriah Heep drummer Lee Kerslake and the wonderful Bob Daisley on bass guitar – and Daisley, fresh out of Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow, was arguably the catalyst for the whole project.

Bob Daisley hooked up with Ozzy Osbourne after a chance meeting in London and, after jamming at Ozzy's house in Stafford, urged him to 'get serious'. When Rhoads was flown in from California he and Daisley clicked, and the three started writing songs, with Daisley and Rhoads working together on the music, Osbourne providing vocal melodies, and Daisley cooking up 90 per cent of the lyrics. The album was recorded in March and April of 1980 and released in September of that year, and to date it has sold well over six million copies worldwide.

The subsequent history of the group of musicians who recorded it has been less positive. Rhoads died in a plane crash on March 19 1982, and Daisley, alongside Kerslake, has been battling to get properly paid for his contribution to the album ever since 1986.

When it comes to Daisley's playing, however, there is no controversy. It is quite simply a perfect marriage of melody, support, chops and groove. Although he's always pictured around this time playing a Fender Precision, Daisley used a white Gibson EB-3 on *Blizzard*, plugging into one of Rhoads' Marshall stacks to achieve a warm, tight tone with superbly even clarity.

Many of the bass parts are a total surprise on first listening – at this time it just wasn't the done thing to be very melodic in a heavy rock context. Daisley, who really felt he was in the best band he'd ever played in, allowed his love of Motown's James Jamerson to freely permeate the basslines he created and the result was a free-flowing, funky feel which, alongside Rhoads' perfect fusion of classical influences and blues-rock, really sets the album apart from its peers. Any rock bassists out there who are really serious about their playing simply have got to check this album out.

1 DESCENDING SCALAR PART — 4/4 TIME

Daisley's modus operandi on the recording of *Blizzard Of Ozz* was to hit the song with a chunk of root-note action and then embellish it with a wicked melody or a dizzying fill. There are occasions where he keeps it simple for whole sections on songs such as *Revelation (Mother Earth)* and *I Don't Know*, invariably exhibiting super-solid time and excellent feel in the process. Our first example is based on the equally simple chorus part from the lighters-in-the-air ballad classic that is *Goodbye To Romance*.

2 BLUESY EIGHTH-NOTES — 4/4 TIME

As both Daisley and Rhoads were blues fans, it's not surprising that many of the songs bear this influence, although *No Bone Movies* is the only track that comes close to out-and-out blues-rock. Daisley's bass part is fairly kinetic here, with the stand out section being the bass/rhythm guitar unison under Rhoads' wild, distorted slide solo. It's a real old-school rock'n'roll-inspired riff. This example will get you close; it looks straightforward but requires a pause for thought in the fingering department. The rest in bar one is also crucial.

3 QUARTER NOTES WITH MELODY — 4/4 TIME

The *Blizzard Of Ozz* album produced some timeless classics that Osbourne still performs in his set to this day and it's a list that unquestionably includes the rather splendid *Crazy Train*. There's much to admire here, from Rhoads' frantic riffing and superb solo to Kerslake's disco hi-hat work and the disturbingly catchy chorus. Daisley goes into hyper-drive during the solo (see below) but the basic verse part is just superb: as our version suggests, it's a mixture of quarter notes and blatantly funky melody.

4 OCTAVES AND BLUES RUNS — 4/4 TIME

There are lots of propulsive, quarter-note based parts on the album, including *Crazy Train*, *No Bone Movies* and the awesome *Mr Crowley*. With each song, variation and embellishment is what prevents it from becoming tedious. *I Don't Know*, the barn-storming set opener, is an excellent example, with Daisley's quarter-notes dominating the verses and chorus only to be usurped by a funky eighth-note line in the bridge. Check out our version of the latter, where a hot tempo makes it trickier than it looks.

5 FUNKY BASS AND DRUMS IN UNISON

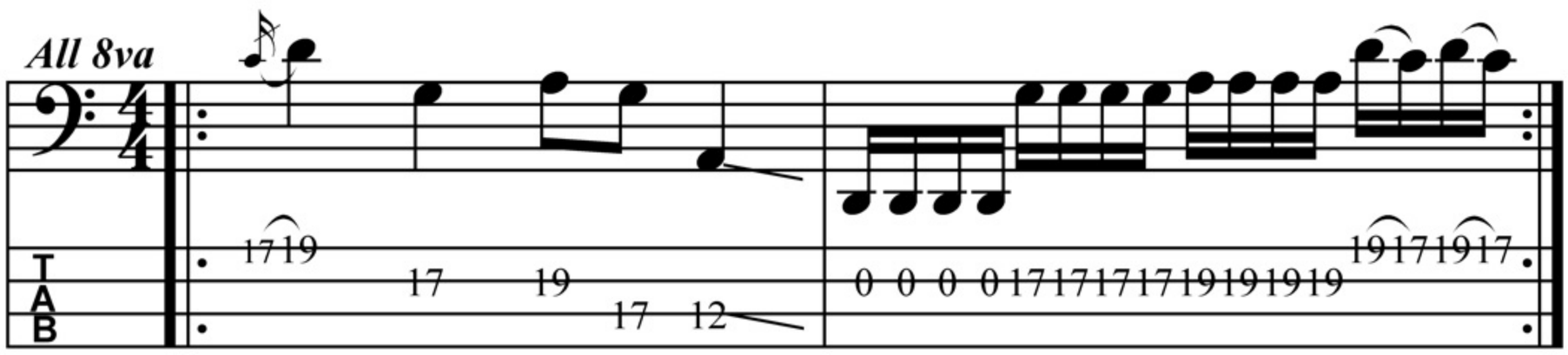
4/4 TIME

As well as variations on the flow of the part, if you listen carefully you'll also find something a little bit more intelligent within the arrangements here. Take *Suicide Solution*: on the face of it, it's another solid quarter-note excursion which, in truth, drags a little bit. But listen more carefully and you'll hear Kerslake doubling Daisley's bass fills with those of his own throughout the song and, even better, a funky, accented rhythmic unison in the bridge section (at 0:55). These two bars will get you heading in the right direction.

6 HIGH REGISTER FILLS

4/4 TIME

Most of Daisley's melodic playing is delivered in the meaty lower and middle registers; he only really ventures up to the top end of the fingerboard on *I Don't Know*, but what he dishes out here is very tasty. There's the gorgeous double-stop fill sprinkled through the verses, for a start, and then there are the licks he plays to welcome in the groove at the front of the track and again after yet another awesome Rhoads guitar solo. Check out our versions of the latter: they're pretty tough at tempo but great fun to play.



7 DOUBLE STOPS

4/4 TIME

The majority of the basslines on *Blizzard* are played with a pick, but *Revelation (Mother Earth)* contains a section where Daisley resorts to his digits for plucking purposes. He may actually be playing the whole thing with fingers – it's less kinetic and the tone has much less attack than any of the other songs on the album – but from the second development of the song (1:24) Daisley plays double stops (two notes at the same time), invariably using the side of his thumb for low notes and index finger for high notes.

8 FLAT-OUT SIXTEENTH NOTES

4/4 TIME

Our final example is a high-tempo, 16th-note workout. You'll find Daisley employing this chops-busting line under Rhoads' coda section solo on *Mr Crowley*, but our example will sound more like a trimmed-down version of his supercharged accompaniment to the guitar solo on *Crazy Train*. It's a scale in groups of 16th notes that's a total nightmare to play fingerstyle at the asking tempo of 138bpm (and really hard for plectrum players). As always, starting with a slow tempo and staying relaxed will get you there.

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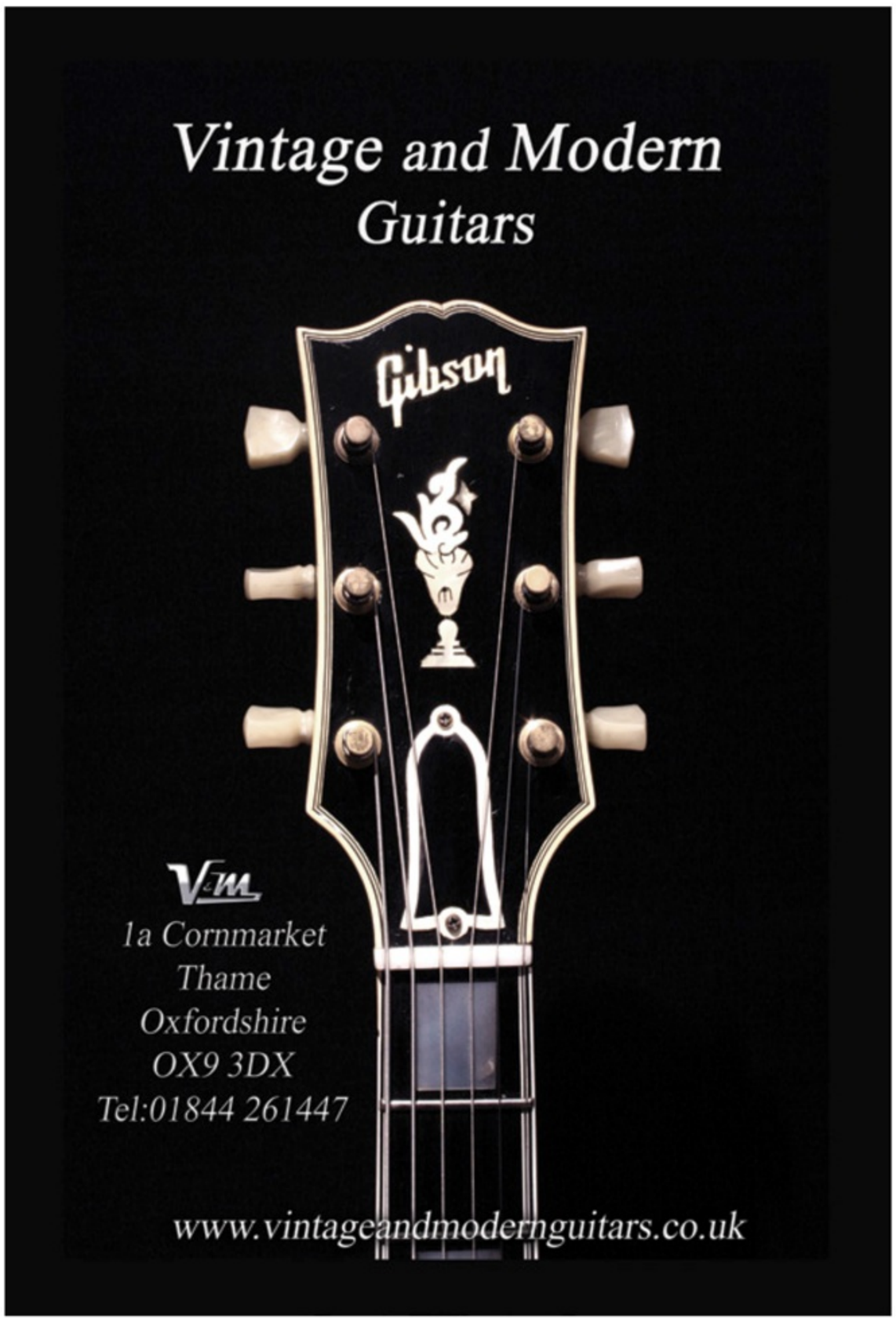

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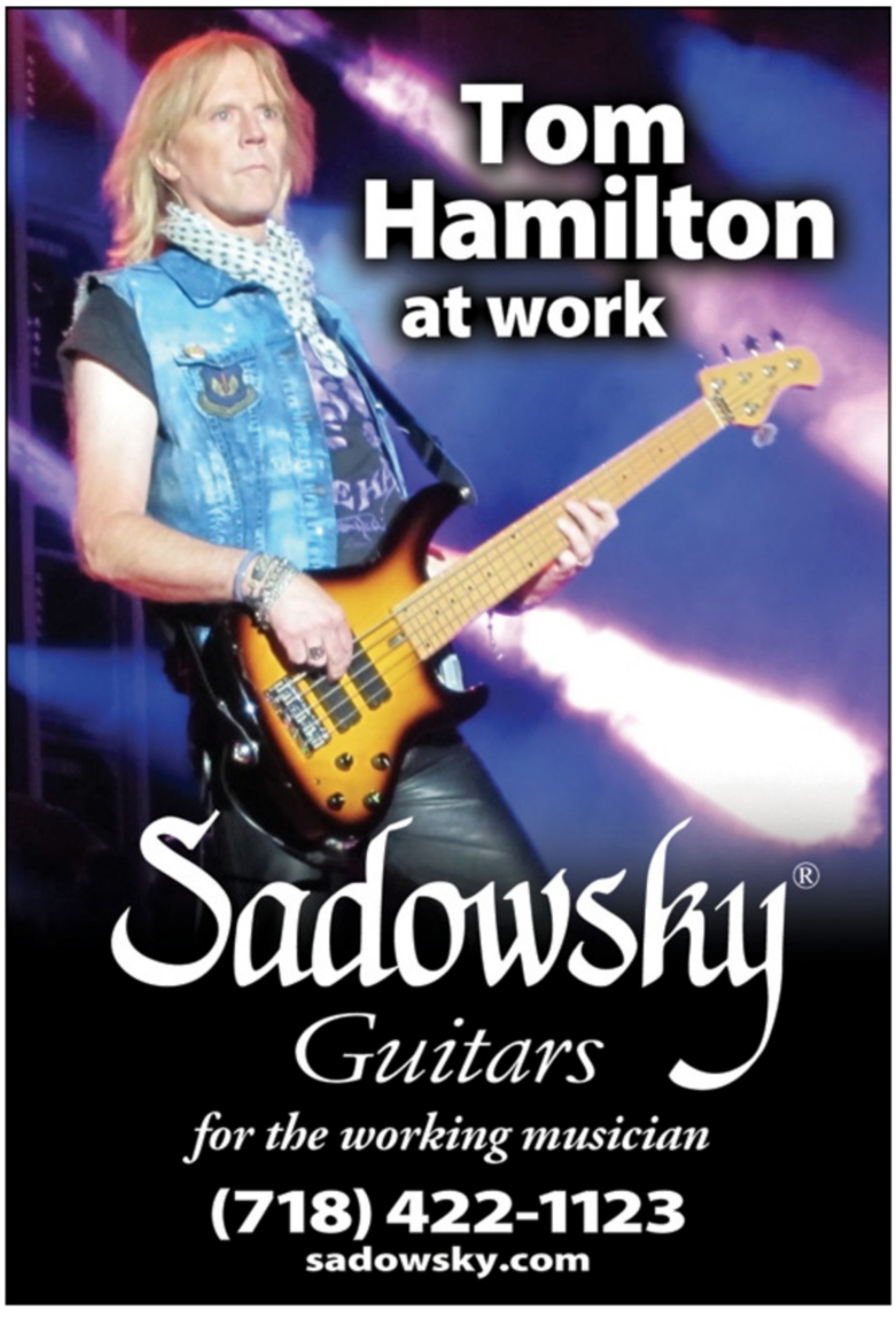
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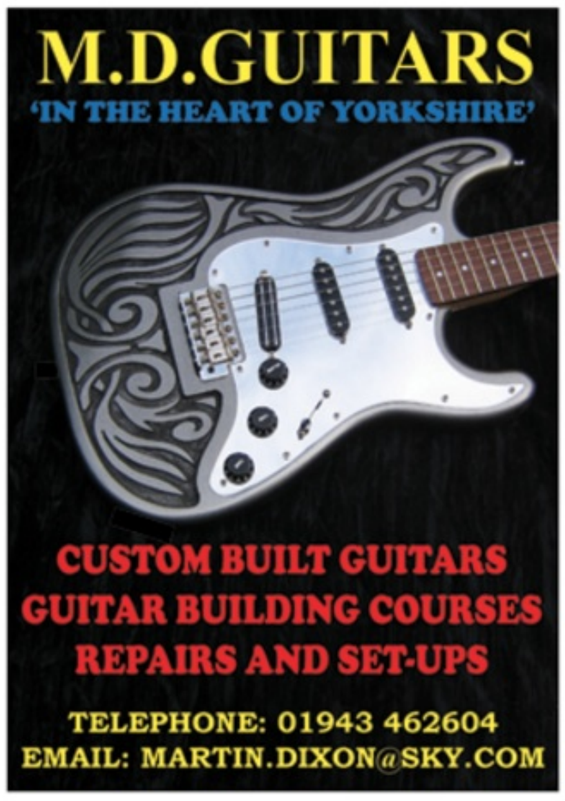

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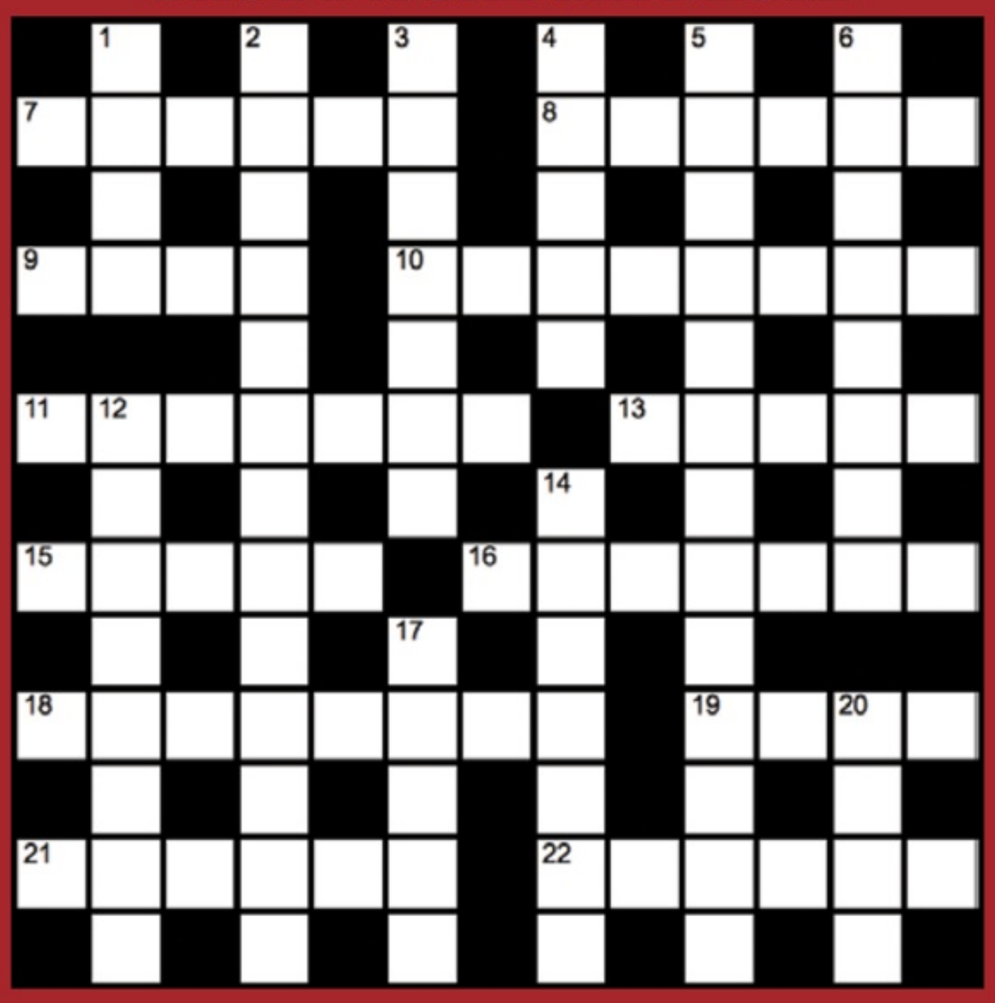
Vox Foundation 50W solid-state bass amp with Vox 1x18" Foundation bass cab, 1960s, great recording/small gig rig, recently serviced, both vgc, £750 pair. Steve 07774 696003, London

CROSSWORD MAY 2012



ACROSS

7. Break levee time (6)

8. FBI ban e-zines containing shredders' brand (6)

9. Ron ___ AKA Bumblefoot (4)

10. Variously gilds the pleasures (8)

11. Slating stereo balance (7)

13. Jazzer Mike sounding severe (5)

15. Weapon from Levinson (5)

16. Left paid worker for beginner (7)

18. Watch the sky for most of a Schecter guitar (8)

19. US trade show in gun ammunition (1,1,1,1)

21. Retreat about pip reportedly (6)

22. South useful for bitter mix (6)

DOWN

1. Money from Million Dollar Quartet? (4)

2. As one daringly mixed bassist for Bowie (4,3,6)

3. Second choice finale raising pitch (7)

4. Bassist ___ Sheehan (5)

5. Extended family member when guitar lad confused (8-2-3)

6. No tears in complimentary accommodation (4-4)

12. Confused tale told of chosen part (8)

14. Back about poem (7)

17. US casualty after craze for volume control (5)

20. Fashion for one of Dorian, Ionian etc (4)

Fender Cyber Deluxe 65W modelling amp. Built-in effects and tuner, 64 programs, four-button footswitch. Light home use only, £275 ono. Tel: 01283 810158, Staffs

Boss ME50, as new, box and manual, £99. Tel Julian 01962 732036, Hampshire

Fender Telecaster 1977, rare black-on-black, R/N, superb, bought in LA in 2005, plays, sounds, looks the business, £1695 ono. Tel Richard 07727 624039. Barnsley

Hofner 500/1 Violin Bass, 50th Ann #33/50, solid carved top, luxury case with hygrometer/ humistat, plus fitted flightcase, mint, boxed, £1850. Tel: Steve 07774 696003, London

Boss OD-20 twin overdrive/ distortion pedal used but vg with box and manual, £90. Tel: Phil 07951 951431, Bromley

Fender Strat, Roadworn '60s as new, with gigbag, home use only, bargain at £520. Tel: 07702 011982 or 01702 219768

Gibson original 1963 Hummingbird, beautifully faded cherry sunburst, fantastic tone, nice low playing action, OHSC, £3650, for more details tel: 07903 243873

Status Shark, black, 1993, mint, £430. 1998 USA Fender Jazz bass, sunburst, R/N, £750. Pair WEM Club 2x12 12 ohm speaker cabs circa 1973, £150 the pair. Tel 07773 276815, Kendal

George Harrison-style rosewood solidbody. Black guard, Hot Rails, new tweed case, good condition £475 ono. Tel 07753 224395 wirral area. Email: timbrett48@gmail.com

Aria Custom Shop SWB-04 electric upright bass. Excellent condition. Swap for USA Fender Jazz Bass with maple neck. Tel: 0208 845 2860, daytime only, Middlesex

Gibson 1991 Firebird V, immac, £1100. Gibson 1980 Flying V natural, vgc £1700. Short nickel Gibson vibrola, no screws/ spacers, £200. WEM Clubman valve combo with 1x12 speaker, £250. Tel: 07773 276815, Kendal

Burns Apache Double Six Special, greenburst, tremolo. No 11 of 12, case. Only one in Britain, very rare, cost £1550, swap for Gibson 335. Tel: Joe 07887 972019, Lanarkshire

Martin OM-42. Excellent condition with Fishman Elipse electronics, sounds fantastic. Tel: 07786 330594.

Custom Tones Ethos TLE Dumble impersonater, unused, still in box. Swap for TC Hall Of Fame Reverb. Tel: 0208 845 2860, Middlesex, daytime only

JM Custom pedal steel guitar. 3 pedals, 3 knee levers. Swap for any USA Fender or Gibson guitar. Tel: 0208 845 2860, Middlesex, daytime only

Danelectro Reel 2 Reel Tape Echo, home use, as new £55. Barber Tone Press as new £75. Tel: 01429 296413. Hartlepool

Fender Squier owned and signed by Gary Moore. Been offered £4000 so bid me. Tel 07919 588258, Essex.

Gibson Dove, 2011, mint condition with Gibson undersaddle pickup. Lovely, £1495. Might p/x or swop W.H.Y. Tel: 0208 9084278, Harrow.

Fender Precision, 1973, natural M/N, all orig inc. covers, EMG fitted/original supplied. Case, superb, £1750 ono Tel: 0208 9777228. Email pnbell@ btinternet.com

Gallato French gypsy guitar, Tchavola Schmitt 452. Rosewood back/sides, spruce top, engraved tuners, replica Selmer tailpiece, £1200 with case. Tel: 01702 526515, Essex

Fender Jaguar Bass, 2006, CIJ, Hotrod Red with matching headstock, only available in USA, virtually unplayed, £650, email garrol@btinternet.com, Tel: 07970 997271

Tokai Explorer, £200. Jackson PC3, EMGs, amber, £495. Ashdown Peacemaker 20W all valve, £200. Bass starter pack with amp, £100. Session Rocket, £30. 01491 833 671, Oxfordshire

Casio DG10 synth guitar, £100. Daisy Rock 12-string electric, £80. Cort Curbow bass, £120. 07710 147 305, Herts area

Crossword answers

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BACKSTAGE

Did you know, in the month of May...

May 1970 ... Guitarist Peter Green plays his last gig with Fleetwood Mac at the Bath Festival.

The story goes that Peter decided to leave Fleetwood Mac after being brainwashed by shady German anarchists at an after-show acid party in Munich the previous month. The reality, however, was that Green was already completely disillusioned with the music industry and, in true hippy-dippy style, decided he wanted to give most of the band's future earnings to charity. This caused more than a little tension with Mick Fleetwood and the other band members, but eventually the split became a reasonably amicable one.

1957 ... Gibson buys Epiphone for $20,000.

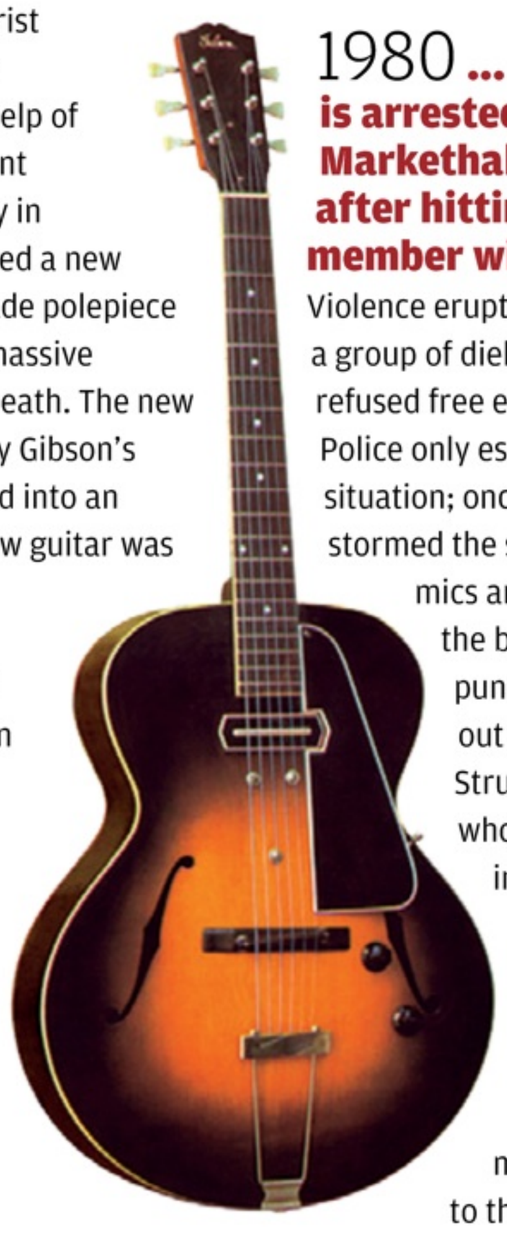
These days Epiphone is recognised the world over as Gibson's budget brand, but from the 1930s it had established itself as a genuine competitor to its future paymaster. The company originally built instruments under the name The House Of Stathopoulo. Epaminondas 'Epi' Stathopoulo took the helm from his father Anastasios in 1915, and by 1930 the name was changed to Epiphone. Under the new moniker the company went from strength to strength, becoming well known for its range of quality archtops, particularly the Masterbilt line. Post-war, hard times were to follow, and with no answer to the new Telecaster and Les Paul the Stathopoulo clan were forced to sell up.

1976 ... The Who smash the world record for the loudest concert ever.

Generally credited for coaxing Jim Marshall into building the first Marshall stack for their early '60s shows, the Who were never afraid to turn it up to 11. During a huge gig at Charlton Athletic football ground they made it official, hitting 120dB by using a 76,000W PA system built by Tasco for the show at a cost of £7000. Exposure to such noise levels is known to cause 'permanent shift of hearing' or partial deafness, as Pete Townshend is now painfully aware.

1936 ... Gibson ships the ES-150, widely considered to be the first modern electric Spanish guitar.

After failing to capitalise on the pioneering electric experiments of Lloyd Loar, who left to form Vivi-Tone, Gibson called on the services of steel guitarist Alvino Rey (born Alvin McBurney). With the help of engineers at instrument company Lyon & Healy in Chicago, Rey prototyped a new pickup with a solid blade polepiece attached to a pair of massive five-inch magnets beneath. The new design was finalised by Gibson's Walter Fuller and fitted into an f-hole archtop. The new guitar was named the ES-150, indicating Electro-Spanish and a price of $150. It would make an indelible mark in the hands of Charlie Christian and many others. The pickup was discontinued in 1942 but reissued on the ES-175CC in 1978, and 'CC' lookalike pickups are still in vogue today.



1943 ... Muddy Waters boards a train in Clarksdale, Mississippi, clutching a one-way ticket to the northern industrial centre of Chicago.

The 16-hour train journey would have cost Muddy pretty much every penny he had, but when he arrived he found he could earn as much in a week on factory wages as he could in a year on the plantation. Waters soon hooked up with Jimmy Rogers and the pair attached pickups to their acoustic guitars and jammed every night, usually with the help of a half pint of whisky, honing what would become known as Chicago blues.

1980 ... Joe Strummer is arrested at the Markethalle in Hamburg after hitting an audience member with his Tele.

Violence erupted in Hamburg after a group of diehard punks were refused free entry to the concert. Police only escalated the volatile situation; once in, the rioters stormed the stage, grabbed the mics and began accusing the band of dishonouring punk ethos and selling out to 'CBS Schweine'. Strummer struck a 'fan' who was reportedly inciting the crowd against him. Ironically, it was the band's early ideology that helped inspire the more politicised edge to the punk movement.

1987 ... Ibanez presents the first JEM to Steve Vai.

When Vai's 'Green Meanie' Charvel was stolen, he turned to Ibanez. The JEM was first issued in a limited run of 777, all finished in Loch Ness green. The H/S/H pickup layout has become a staple, while the deep-cut pointy horns echoed 1985's RG series. Vai's endorsement helped cement Ibanez's position as a genuine competitor to the top US brands.

1965 ... Eric Clapton procures the famous 'Bluesbreaker' Les Paul.

Eric found the guitar in a shop in London's West End – believed to be Selmers on Charing Cross Road. Being a huge Freddy King fan, he recognised the Les Paul from the sleeve of *Let's Dance Away And Hide Away With Freddy King*. Freddy's Les Paul was actually an earlier goldtop with P90s, while Eric's was a humbucking Standard. Who knows, had there been a goldtop on sale in that corner of London 44 years ago, things may have been quite different.

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